

**A history of ‘relevance’:
South African psychology in focus**

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Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town

April 2013

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the many people who contributed to the writing of this thesis. In no particular order, they include, first, my fellow students, for never ceasing to remind me how „irrelevant’ South African psychology is; second, my supervisor, Don Foster, for his guidance and enthusiasm; third, my mentor, Kurt Danziger, for his wisdom and generosity; fourth, dozens of psychologists, for giving freely of their time, ideas and resources; and fifth, my wife, Yumnah, for helping me see this project through.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the historical and discursive contours of the „relevance’ debate in South African psychology. It begins by contextualizing the debate, detailing how appeals for „relevance’ in the broader discipline proliferated during the sixties and seventies in American, European and „Third World’ psychology. The thesis observes further how widespread conditions of social turmoil precipitated the development of this crisis over „relevance’, which was encouraged also by traits peculiar to psychology. These include the discipline’s indecisiveness regarding its cognitive interest, its reliance on a basic but rarefied science for its scientific eminence, and its longstanding difficulty accommodating sociality. Proponents of „relevance’, that is, insist that psychology attend to „real world’ concerns. However, since the thesis advances the position that materiality can only be accessed via language, it is asserted that the credentialing of „relevance’ occurs rhetorically. The research questions, in turn, reflect this discursive emphasis: 1) What are the terms of debate within South African psychology concerning its „relevance’?; 2) How have these changed with passage of time?; 3) How is „relevance’ articulated currently within the discipline?; and 4) How can changes in South African psychology’s discourses about „relevance’ be understood? In order to answer these questions, forty-five presidential, keynote and opening addresses, delivered at annual national psychology congresses between 1950 and 2011, were collected from national libraries, university archives and private collections. Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis provided the analytic frame, which focused on the textual/rhetorical, discursive and socio-historical features of addresses. At the discursive level in particular, discourses pertaining to *disciplinarity*, *professionalism*, *ethnic-national service*, *liberation*, *salvation*, *civic responsibility* and *the market* were identified, all of which interpreted „relevance’ in contrasting ways. Currently, however, it is „market relevance’ that serves as the hegemonic reference point for South African psychology’s discursive order. This explains why the emancipatory „social relevance’ that psychologists have been espousing since the 1980s remains out of reach. Indeed, since „market relevance’ has become invisibilized, a seeming lack of critical language awareness about their discursive practices suggests that South African psychologists will continue to lament, without prospect of remedy, the „social irrelevance’ of the discipline.

NOTE TO EXAMINERS

This thesis adopts the spelling conventions of U.S. English. Where quotes appear making use of U.K. English, the spelling has been retained.

The following papers emerged during the course of this study and were drawn on in various parts of the thesis:

- Long, W. (2013). The many faces of „relevance’: South African psychology in context. In A. Marvakis, J. Motzkau, D. Painter, R.C. Ruto-Korir, G. Sullivan, S. Triliva & M. Wieser (Eds.), *Doing psychology under new conditions: Selected papers from the 14th biennial conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology in Thessaloniki, Greece* (pp. 103-111). Concord, CA: Captus Press.
- Long, W. (2013). Rethinking „relevance’: South African psychology in context. *History of Psychology*, 16(1), 19-35.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
APA	American Psychological Association
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CA	conversation analysis
CDA	critical discourse analysis
CPS	Chinese Psychological Society
FAK	Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurorganisasies
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IMRAD	Introduction, Methods, Results And Discussion
IOK	Islamization of Knowledge
LSP	Liberation Social Psychology
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIPR	National Institute for Personnel Research
NP	National Party
OASSSA	Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa
PASA	Psychological Association of South Africa
PIRSA	Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa
PROD	Personal Relations and Organisational Development
PSJ	Psychological Society, Johannesburg
PsySSA	Psychology Society of South Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAJP	South African Journal of Psychology
SAPA	South African Psychological Association
SARSC	South African Road Safety Council

SSK	sociology of scientific knowledge
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	United Party
WESSA	White English-speaking South African
WFC	Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come. (Victor Hugo)

BECOMING A PSYCHOLOGIST IN SOUTH AFRICA

It was early 2005. I had just submitted a formal request to the Professional Board of Psychology to have my name removed from the professional register. Having recently completed a year of compulsory community service as a newly qualified clinical psychologist, all that stood between me and my chosen career was a board exam. The trouble was that twelve months of visiting community health centers in the most impoverished areas of the Western Cape had left me feeling disillusioned about the social value of the profession. It was not for me. So I traveled instead, did some contract research and, by the end of the year, found myself back where I had left off. I wrote the board exam. But after nearly four years as a military psychologist, addictions counsellor and university lecturer, the same questions were still unanswered. How „relevant’ was my work in a majority black country where eighty percent of psychologists could only speak English or Afrikaans – the languages of white privilege? How „relevant’ could a profession hope to be that charged the kind of hourly rate that most South Africans would never be able to afford? And how „relevant’ was this discipline – beaver away at the southernmost tip of Africa – that saw little wrong in importing most of its university textbooks from the United States of America? Rather than deregister for a second time, I thought I had a good-enough reason to register for doctoral studies. Soon enough, „relevance’ started taking on a life of its own. I quickly realized that the answers to my questions would not involve anything close to what I had hoped for, namely, the obvious and uncomplicated exchange of „irrelevance’ for „relevance’. What emerged instead from my early readings was the fact that psychologists around the world had been thinking about „relevance’ for quite some time – the problem was that they did not seem to agree on what it actually meant or if it was even necessary.

THE DISPUTED ‘RELEVANCE’ OF SOUTH AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY

In the last years of apartheid rule, critical psychologists slammed the discipline’s indifference to the human rights abuses of the day, accusing it of lacking „relevance’. After nineteen years of democracy, however, questions persist about the „relevance’ of psychology for the lives of the majority of South Africans (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; C. Macleod, 2004; Mayekiso,

Strydom, Jithoo, & Katz, 2004; Pillay & Siyothula, 2008). Claims of professional 'irrelevance' are substantiated by referring variously to the skewed racial demographics of the country's registered psychologists and counselors (Pillay & Siyothula, 2008), the dearth of qualified professionals that speak indigenous African languages (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004), biased selection criteria for admission into professional training programs (Stevens, 2001) and the uneven racial composition of selection panels (Mayekiso et al., 2004).

Academic psychology is also deemed to have come up short on the 'relevance' index. Since the 1970s, the argument has been made repeatedly that psychological theories remain beholden to Euro-American models of human functioning (Holdstock, 1981a; Turton, 1986) – the more radical version is that the paradigmatic inclinations of psychology are in keeping with “the worldview of the coloniser” (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004, p. 631). Others object to what they imagine as the implied alternative, namely, the reification of culture and the relegation of class – known otherwise as the apartheid-era discourse of cultural difference (Nell, 1990; Seedat & Nell, 1990; Swartz, 1991; Turton, 1986).¹ And on the research front, one encounters allegations of continuing disinterest in the socio-political affairs of the country – as in, for example, an analysis of papers published in the *South African Journal of Psychology* (SAJP) between 1999 and 2003, according to which a mere two percent of articles dealt with the issue of HIV / AIDS while a further two percent handled that of 'race' (C. Macleod, 2004).

DEFINING 'RELEVANCE'

The ubiquity of 'relevance' is such that, when undergraduate psychology students unfamiliar with the nuances of the debate comment matter-of-factly on their chosen field of study's unsuitability for the national life, some modicum of explanation is required to account for the recalcitrance of 'relevance' talk. It may be that the conceptual plasticity of 'relevance' – the precise meaning of the term has never been determined – explains its enduring pertinence. In South African psychology it functions as little more than an adjective: disciplinary trends are either lauded as 'relevant' or dismissed as 'irrelevant'. The adjectival form of 'relevance', however, obscures an historical significance that is enabled through a focus on its nominal usage. 'Relevance' is then transformed into a *concept* that, like any other, is the bearer of its own history.

¹ The marginality of Afrocentric psychology has led at least one commentator to conclude that psychologists in South Africa do not have a psychology (Ratele, 2004).

Whatever the surrounding lack of consensus, „relevance’ – as will become clear in this study – evokes invariably the troubled antinomy inhabited by science and society,² reminding one that the notion of „science for its own sake’ is nowadays difficult to entertain (Harding, 1991). The virtuousness of science is no longer an assumed truth: contingent upon social formations, science over the centuries has had different things asked of it (Hessels, van Lente, & Smits, 2009). The production of knowledge has been associated with values and institutions for at least the past four hundred years and has been „nationalized’ to an ever-increasing degree over the last one-and-a-half centuries (Pestre, 2003). Science is a fundamentally social exercise: as an intellectual practice, research is located within a wider, rule-bound community of practice immersed in hegemonic social configurations.

Over the years, South African psychologists have understood „relevance’ to mean different things, complicating the task of definition (Biesheuvel, 1991; Dawes, 1986). This study takes the position that, despite the *word* not always being used by interlocutors, „relevance’ as a *concept* is invoked whenever a particular relationship between psychology and society is being advocated. One such articulation – *social relevance* – expresses the view that the discipline must contribute to human welfare by ensuring the psychological wellbeing of the citizenry (Nell, 1990). According to another version – it is, strictly speaking, a subset of „social relevance’ – *cultural relevance* holds that psychology should be Afrocentric in order to meet the mental health needs of the country’s black African majority (Holdstock, 1981a). A third reading – *market relevance* – encourages psychological research and practice that address the imperatives of state and industry. Whereas appeals for „social’ and „cultural relevance’ were especially prominent during the 1980s when resistance to apartheid rule was at its peak, „market relevance’ has become important in the post-apartheid era, when dwindling state support has forced institutions of higher education to adopt marketplace behaviors. However, since all three renderings tend to assume that applied psychology is the only path to „relevance’, they are to be distinguished from a fourth strand known as *theoretical relevance*.³ Here, the argument is that a fragmenting discipline’s lack of universals is not helped by a focus on context-driven research at the expense of hypotheses constructed from basic theory. Moreover, “special psychologies” are unable to produce their own universals because their projects are designed in ways that do not permit the generation of law-like statements (Biesheuvel, 1991, p. 137). Whether one calls it „academic freedom’ or

² Although this study considers the blanket term ‘society’ to be something of an abstraction, debates about ‘relevance’ treat it as a given.

³ Instead of social, market and theoretical ‘relevance’, Biesheuvel (1991) writes of ‘communal’, ‘utilitarian’ and ‘sapiential relevance’ respectively.

„ivory tower syndrome’, „theoretical relevance’ cannot be dispensed with in the pursuit of „social’, ‘cultural’ or „market relevance’.

Underlying talk of „relevance’ is the notion of a „public good’ – “unendingly contestable, dangerous in the extreme, inevitably manipulated by elites” (Mansbridge, 1998, p. 3). Two points are of importance here. First, the philosophical meaning of the „public good’ is historically variable and therefore unfinalizable.⁴ Second, the political meaning of ‘public’ is equivocal: the ‘public’ is neither unitary nor homogeneous, while the multiple communities that comprise it are constituted historically and discursively (Calhoun, 1998). As a result, petitions in the name of the „public good’ – and, by implication, „relevance’ – are subject to several constraints. First, in any given situation, it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty what the „public good’ is. Second, despite the concept’s open-endedness, dominant social groupings retain the advantage of defining the „public good’ in their interests. And third, promoting the „public good’ by appealing to altruism – „love’ and „duty’ are the latter’s foremost incarnations – “opens the door to demagoguery” (Mansbridge, 1998, p. 4).

Accordingly, this thesis does not assume that the achievement of „relevance’ in psychology represents a desirable state of affairs. Its guiding principle, rather, is to demonstrate how the concept has been summoned in contradictory ways and for differing ends. And yet the thesis is not beyond politics. Not only is there no such thing as „positionlessness’, some would view that idea as dishonoring the sacrifices many South African psychologists made in pursuit of a „relevant’ psychology. Indeed, by its end, the thesis will have declared its politics – that the idiom of „relevance’ has outlived its usefulness.

THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis illustrates how, over a sixty-year period spanning the years 1950 to 2011, appeals for „relevance’ in South African psychology were advanced by politically conservative, progressive and radical psychologists alike. „Relevance’, therefore, is not a politically neutral construct but imbibes the ideological currents of the day. Correspondingly, the thesis traces the concatenation of politics, knowledge production and calls for „relevance’ in South

⁴ For example, whereas Plato claimed that what was good for the public was good for the individual, Adam Smith argued the opposite in his treatise on ‘invisible hand’ economics. Their shared position on the compatibility of private and public goods, meanwhile, contradicts a third perspective that developed out of medieval Christian theology. As for contemporary meanings of the ‘public good’, these include 1) the aggregate of individual private goods; 2) the outcome of a process (e.g. a democratic process); and 3) that which accrues to a collective rather than to the individuals that constitute the collective (Mansbridge, 1998).

African psychology and beyond, chronicling the journey in which „relevance’ came to be emptied of its emancipatory potential.

Chapter 2 sets the scene by taking the reader on an international tour of „relevance’, passing through the United States, Europe and the so-called „Third World’, revealing how demands for „relevance’ emerged during distinct times of crisis in national conversations around the world. The chapter recounts how conditions of social unrest – be it the war in Vietnam, totalitarian governance or the colonial aftermath – afforded fertile breeding grounds for advocates of „relevance’. In the context of a then internationalizing discipline, it is also observed how concerns about „relevance’ arose at moments when psychological knowledge and expertise started „traveling’ beyond its traditional homelands.

Chapter 3 theorizes in more formal terms this preponderance of „relevance’ discourse in the worldwide psychological community. Towards this end, it revisits the discipline’s struggle to define its subject matter, the relationship between its pure and applied branches, and its difficulty accommodating the social world, arguing that psychology is constitutionally predisposed to being charged with „irrelevance’. The chapter considers also the rhetorical quality of „relevance’ and details how it feeds into an unsolvable discourse–materiality binary. Thereafter, the chapter outlines the study’s theoretical framework and concludes with its rationale and research questions.

Chapter 4 is primarily about method. It tells of the initial difficulty involved in the „operationalization’ of „relevance’ before providing a description of the data corpus, which consists of presidential, keynote and opening addresses delivered at national South African psychology congresses between 1950 and 2011. The chapter proceeds to situate the investigation of „relevance’ in the rhetoric of inquiry, leading to a comprehensive account of the analytic methods of choice – rhetorical and discourse analysis – as set out in the works of Michael Billig, Robert Connors, Edward Corbett, Norman Fairclough, Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell. It examines the problem of epistemological relativism in discourse analysis as well as the question of ethics, and concludes with a few general remarks regarding the study’s significance.

The next six chapters contain the results of the analysis. Chapter 5 presents the findings of a thematic analysis that is intended to furnish the reader with a synopsis of the data set’s contents. Chapter 6 focuses on two addresses delivered in 1962, the year in which Afrikaner psychologists withdrew from the South African Psychological Association (SAPA) to form the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). Whereas

Chapter 7 explores the preceding years (1950–1961) by analyzing the addresses leading up to the split, Chapter 8 analyzes addresses delivered in the aftermath of the break (1963–1977). Chapter 9 analyzes the addresses of a transitional period (1978–1993) during which PIRSA and SAPA were reunited and other politically progressive and radical psychological associations were established. Chapter 10 analyzes addresses of the post-apartheid period (1996–2011).

Chapter 11 provides a summary of the analytic chapters' key findings, an account of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. Emphasis is laid on a newfangled rendering of „relevance' that has arisen in recent years, in which market considerations have displaced a once emancipatory agenda. Since its liberationist heyday in the 1980s, „relevance' has been reduced to little more than a catch-phrase in funding applications and mission statements. What is indispensable, therefore, is a critical awareness of the discipline's discursive practices, which, in turn, can lay the groundwork for a new language of resistance.

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF ‘RELEVANCE’

When ideas go unexamined and unchallenged for a long enough time, certain things happen. They become mythological, and they become very, very, powerful. (E.L. Doctorow)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter traces the appearance of the ‘relevance’ question in psychology to the social unrest of the 1960s. It describes how the turbulence of those years precipitated calls for the transformation of knowledge-producing institutions, which were taken up subsequently in discipline-specific debates about ‘social relevance’. In psychology, the American demand for ‘social relevance’ was fueled by protests against racial inequality and an unpopular war in Vietnam; in Europe, totalitarian rule was one of several reference points informing allegations of ‘social irrelevance’; and all over the postcolonial Third World, an ‘irrelevant’ discipline was berated repeatedly. Meanwhile, American and European attempts to internationalize social psychology by means of ‘vertical’ research collaborations contributed to the worldwide traction of ‘relevance’ discourse.

THE WORLDWIDE ‘IRRELEVANCE’ OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Demands for ‘relevance’ are confined neither to psychology nor to South Africa. A case in point is the international call of the 1960s for educational ‘relevance’, made first by disaffected university students and taken up subsequently by their teachers (Rotenstreich, 1972). On both sides of the Atlantic, emancipatory anti-capitalist sentiments demanded reforms in knowledge production, finding resonance especially among the social sciences. Unusually, the inner circles of student activists were distinctly bourgeois (Boudon, 1971). The young people that railed against the ‘irrelevance’ of their educations were not the working-class victims of epistemic violence but, rather, a well-to-do generation scandalized by what they saw as the moral hypocrisy of preceding ones. Student protesters the world over were, in effect, sympathizing with those they deemed less privileged than themselves and, in an ironic reversal, began rubbing the same institutions that had served their interests. In the rarefied atmosphere of higher learning, they had come to the conclusion that there was little on offer that could steel them for entry into a society traumatized by racism and war (Sampson, 1970).

Originating in the late fifties, a discourse of *social relevance* started to make headway on a handful of university campuses around America.⁵ For a vocal minority of conscientized students, the college experience had impacted negligibly on their values (Jacob, 1957). The curriculum had not changed in half a century while methods of instruction harked back to medieval times – the direct results of an institutional climate that rewarded faculty for participation in non-teaching activities (Axelrod et al., 1969). Students rebelled against the conception of education as steady-accumulation-of-facts-and-uptake-of-skills as well as their perceived exclusion from decision-making processes in the university – a state of affairs that, in their reckoning, amounted to the preparation of human inputs for the machineries of graduate schools and industry. The natural subversiveness of the academy had been overtaken by “its technical, applied social service functions” – an inevitable consequence of life in the administered society (Sampson, 1970, p. 2).

The dominant culture of vocationalism had come under attack: an interest in interdisciplinary studies started to emerge along with a hope for a deeper understanding of the human condition. 1950s’ privatism – “the expectations of college students of finding contentment in their own personal careers and family life and... their relative unconcern with larger national and international issues” (Axelrod et al., 1969, p. 90) – was now seen as contemptible. Unlike their parents – who had lived through the Depression years – these students knew nothing of deprivation or, indeed, early 1950s’ McCarthyism; this made it somewhat easier for them to criticize what they interpreted as their parents’ social and occupational conformism. They knew all too well about the military draft, too, and at a time when the Supreme Court was making significant rulings against segregation and censorship, dissident politics had become a manifest possibility. Drawn disproportionately from the upper middle-class and committed to the goals of a liberal education, American student activists viewed themselves as the voice of the oppressed.⁶

In Europe, their German doppelgangers were similarly “the first generation that [knew] no economic insecurity and relative poverty [yet] openly perceive[d] the disproportion between the potential wealth and potential gratification of an industrially developed society, and the actual life of the masses in that society” (Habermas, 1971, p. 24). Just as a clutch of American universities were forced into a reflexive rethinking of their

⁵ In 1958, the iconic campus political party SLATE was established at the University of California, Berkeley, initiating the new era of student activism.

⁶ Nonetheless, the activist population was anything but doctrinally consistent, reflecting perhaps its distrust of organized belief systems. Moreover, because of a noticeable predilection for individualistic values – and its being lumped with the politically disenchanted “Pot Left” – it invited charges of anarchy, irrationality, barbarism and *ego-litarianism* (Axelrod, Freedman, Hatch, Katz, & Sanford, 1969, p. 206).

modus operandi, European student protests in connection with a host of social issues – totalitarian governance, nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation, homophobia and the like – brought about analogous but more thoroughgoing consequences. Young radicals committed to a transdisciplinary agenda of social and academic transformation found inspiration in critical theory and the Frankfurt School – despite the School’s own misgivings. For the latter, mobilization had become an end in itself, risking its own undoing through the privatization of “alternativeness” and an aimless “new actionism” (Habermas, 1971, p. 26).⁷

In the Third World, meanwhile, critics insisted that the ‘colonial aftermath’ was a contradiction in terms on the grounds that postcoloniality was located at the onset – not the termination – of colonial rule (Gandhi, 1998). Newly liberated societal energies were sublimated in the euphoria of independence, the groundswell of anti-western nationalism, the twin imperatives of development and change, popular uprisings against political oppression and more general social contradictions, and coincided with discerning calls for the decolonization of everyday consciousness (Fanon, 2008), knowledge institutions (al-Attas, 1985; al-Faruqi, 1982) and the educated class (Mazrui, 1978). Within the academy this revolt against “cultural dependency” (ibid., p. 13) – Fanon (2008) called it “imitativeness” – was taken up in the form of discipline-specific debates about ‘relevance’. For some, what was required was the indigenization of these disciplines. For others, the disciplinary order itself was “a particular manifestation of... how western civilization [saw] its problems [and had] no real meaning for non-western cultures” (Sardar, 2005, p. 200). Questions about ‘relevance’ were consequently difficult to resolve.

THE ‘IRRELEVANCE’ OF AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

Against this backdrop of international appeals for educational ‘relevance’, on September 1st, 1969, the president of the American Psychological Association (APA), George Miller, was introduced at the Association’s annual convention. The theme for that year’s congress had been titled *Psychology and the Problems of Society* and Miller’s (1969) imminent address would itself become a watershed moment in American psychology’s debate on ‘relevance’.⁸ But before he could deliver his talk, a group of students emerged from the audience and

⁷ The rapid dissolution of the student movement would seem to vindicate this skepticism. Another perspective is that a corporatist assimilation of May 1968 values (Pestre, 2003) ensured that the students’ main legacy would be one of “libertarianism which came to be appropriated by a Right eager to dismantle bureaucracies and the welfare state” (Müller, 2002, p. 33).

⁸ Although Miller’s address is cited frequently in discussions about the ‘social relevance’ of psychology, his contribution was not the first. Earlier examples from the sixties include Maslow (1961), Lirtzman (1964), MacLeod (1965), Ring (1967) and King Jr. (1968).

approached the stage. Gary Simkins, national chairman of the Black Students Psychological Association, requested that the student organization be permitted to present a list of demands, the following day, to the APA Council of Representatives (Simpkins & Raphael, 1970). As it turned out, the Council eventually endorsed the list after six hours of debate, validating a five-pronged proposal that demanded equitable selection procedures for entrance into professional psychology training programs, aggressive recruitment of black academics into psychology departments, financial assistance for black students, practical community experience for black trainees and terminal programs at all degree levels. In varying degrees of explicitness, each of the demands was predicated on the felt „irrelevance’ of psychology for black America.

On another front altogether, artifact and ethics crises in psychological experimentation had undermined the real-world applicability of social psychological theory (Baumrind, 1964; Orne, 1962; Rosenthal, 1966), inaugurating “the age of relevance in social psychology” (Rosnow, 1981, p. 78). In an influential paper, Kenneth Ring (1967) framed the corrupting and aimless flamboyance of experimental social psychology as a defensive posturing against the *a priori* vacuousness of the field. The “frivolity” of it all could only be countered by, among other things, initiating research of broad human importance; what Ring hoped for was a return to Lewinian values according to which science and society could progress simultaneously. In a similarly devastating indictment, Kenneth Gergen’s (1973) central thesis was that social psychological facts were mostly unrepeatable and that the preeminent experimental method was, therefore, entirely inadequate as a method of enquiry. Gergen argued that the relationship between psychological science and society was characterized by a “feedback loop”; this was the result of, variously, prescriptive bias in psychological theory, the non-existence of naïve subjects and the influence of western cultural values on subjectivity (specifically, freedom and individuality). The upshot was that “social psychology alters the behavior it seeks to study” (p. 314) – that is, social psychological theory invalidated itself precisely *because* of its relationship with society. Gergen added that society in any event changed across time and place, thwarting in perpetuity all efforts “to build general laws of social behavior” (p. 316): at any given point in time, social psychological theory could never be more than contemporary theory. The implication was that pure science – with its canonical focus on timeless universals that tended to be of passing significance anyway – had to make way for the investigation of „socially relevant’, applied, albeit time-bound hypotheses.

Then again, the equating of „social relevance’ with applied research or, more pointedly, „the promotion of human welfare’ simplified matters to a fault. Miller, for one, reminded his audience that “human welfare has never been operationally defined as a social concept” (1969, p. 1064). Furthermore, whereas Ring’s (1967) version of „social relevance’ was concerned mostly with *what* to study, William McGuire’s (1967) focus was on *where* to conduct the study. The latter would also observe that the demand for „social relevance’ deflected attention away from another, more troubling matter: the „socially relevant’ hypothesis was based typically on a linear model of causality and so did nothing to address the fundamental shortcomings of the experimental method itself (McGuire, 1973). The “relevance of relevance” was now in doubt: the real problem appeared to be “a basic inadequacy of methodology rather than direction” resulting from “a persistent, slavish obsession to fit the study of behavior into existent models of other experimental sciences” (Silverman, 1971, p. 583). „Social relevance’ – and, by implication, social change – seemed inconceivable in an ahistorical psychology that, for decades, had dedicated itself to a mechanistic understanding of human action.

THE ‘IRRELEVANCE’ OF EUROPEAN PSYCHOLOGY

Contemporaneous with these developments, a kindred *zeitgeist* took hold in Western Europe. Inspired by the Frankfurt School’s insistence on the interestedness of all knowledge, the student revolution of 1968 fostered a crisis of „social relevance’ among European social psychologists who stood accused of methodological fetishism (Moscovici, 1972). The discipline had imported wholesale the American “social psychology of the nice person” (p. 18) while inoculating itself against European social verities. And since the American research agenda was apparently in thrall to economic and political stakeholders (Parker, 1989), the implication was that its European hangers-on had “done no more than to operationalize questions and answers which were imagined elsewhere” (Moscovici, 1972, pp. 31-32). To worsen matters, the theoretical impoverishment of European social psychology – a consequence of positivistic epistemology, aversion for philosophical speculation and methodological tensions – confounded any desire to generate locally „relevant’ questions and answers. The outcome was a “psychology of well-tried aphorisms” (p. 37) and an associated charge of triviality. In contrast to Ring’s argument, experimental research was not irrelevant because it was fundamental rather than applied; what made it irrelevant was “due to the social psychologists having often taken the wrong decision as to what kind of *homo* their discipline is concerned with: „biological’, „psychological’ or „sociopsychological”” (Tajfel, 1972a, p.

71). The triteness of social psychological knowledge derived from an ill-conceived attempt to explain social phenomena at the level of the individual. Or, to rephrase Moscovici's (1972) provocative question, there was nothing social about social psychology.

Harré and Secord's (1972) analogous argument drew a line under many of the same themes. The banality of experimental research in social psychology was a direct consequence of the prevailing behaviorist hegemony. The assumption that complex behavior was the uncomplicated aggregate of simple behaviors made the laboratory experiment inadequate for understanding real-world behavior – but suitable for making sense of “a kind of never-never land of behavior” (p. 49). An information-processing model of human beings, conceptual simple-mindedness, the confusion of scientific with human variables, and the “special kind of society” (p. 46) that was generated by the psychological laboratory were all implicated in a corresponding loss of “verisimilitude.” Theory and method were mutually ‘irrelevant’, a scheme of near axiomatic proportions that could only be salvaged by a dramaturgical model of behavior at the center of which stood a capable and conscious actor preoccupied with presentation, monitoring and control.

THE ‘IRRELEVANCE’ OF THIRD WORLD PSYCHOLOGY

It was not long before the ‘relevance’ crisis gained purchase in the disciplinary hinterland. Beginning in the mid-1960s and spreading rapidly over the following decade, a sustained critique of both American and European pre-eminence emerged and proliferated among psychology communities throughout the Third World (Abbott & Durie, 1987; Abdi, 1975; Ardila, 1982; Ching, 1984; Holdstock, 1979, 1981a; Khaleefa, 1997; Naidoo & Kagee, 2009; D. Sinha, 1984). This was less a matter of ‘social relevance’ contradicting itself to become an instance of Fanonian imitateness than of inevitable questions being asked about the Third World applicability of an imported Euro-American “ready-made intellectual package” (Nandy, 1974, p. 7). Psychologists from developing countries naturally assumed a problem-oriented approach “so that the data provided through psychological research [could] be of some use in dealing with myriads of [sic] pressing demands connected with national development” (D. Sinha, 1975, p. 10). These critical calls for ‘social relevance’ formed the intellectual starting-points for positive attempts at indigenizing the discipline, which focused variously on “structural” (resource-driven), “substantive” (content-driven) and “theoretic” (concept-driven) aspects (Kumar, 1979, pp. 104-105 quoted in Atal, 2004, pp. 105-106).

For newly independent countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa, the end of colonialism generated powerful imperatives for socio-economic and technological

development that had taken centuries to accomplish elsewhere. Systematic planning was required not only to effect the necessary changes but also to overcome any attendant resistances, which was to be achieved by revisiting the core ideals of their knowledge-making industries. A shift in the balance was inevitable: „research for prestige’ needed to be tempered in favor of „research for policy’. In research circles throughout the Third World, „social relevance’ became the new mantra, counterposing itself against the “immorality of irrelevance” (Baumrin, 1970 quoted in D. Sinha, 1973, p. 5). Several significant calls for „relevance’ – along with the attempts at substantive and theoretic indigenization they encouraged – are described below.

INDIAN ‘RELEVANCE’

The Indian search for a „macro-psychology’ is a prime example of substantive indigenization (D. Sinha, 1985). During the pre-independence years, Indian research in psychology was at best imitative of Euro-American trends. The situation changed slightly after independence, although topics popular in Western psychology continued to predominate and related only peripherally to the requirements of Indian society. In the early sixties, however, a definitively problem-oriented stance emerged: Indian psychologists became increasingly concerned with practical problems involving national development and social change, and began to direct their research efforts accordingly (D. Sinha, 1986). There was also a growing awareness that theories and methods borrowed from Western sources could not be applied indiscriminately. Jai Sinha, for example, not only discovered that high need for achievement (nACH) individuals were unable to maximize their individual outputs in contexts defined by limited resources but also came to the realization that he would have to make a choice between an exploration of “real-life issues” or a commitment to a “straight-jacketed methodology” (J. B. P. Sinha, 1997, p. 79). By the mid-sixties, propelled by a now strident critique of the patent „foreignness’ of Indian psychology, attempts to indigenize the discipline were under way.

As it happened, Indian psychology’s indigenizing mission yielded mixed results. The psychology of the mid-seventies was deemed “not merely imitative and subservient but also dull and replicative” (Nandy, 1974, p. 5); even the call for „relevance’ was considered imitative and therefore constituted little more than a „gambit.’ At the turn of the decade, there were “signs of growing crisis in psychology” (Pareek, 1980 quoted in D. Sinha, 1986, p. 64). By the nineties, in spite of a now stronger indigenizing trend that encouraged the selection of „socially relevant’ research topics and variables, Indian psychology – marooned in Nandy’s “recipient culture of science” (1974, p. 1) and its own endemic parochialism – was failing to

reap the benefits of multidisciplinary. It was not as if no gains had been made at all – rather, it was that “[m]any psychologists, even in India, are finding it difficult to cast off the microcosmic and individualistic orientation acquired in the West; they are bound by the prevailing disciplinary ethos, are critical about this [indigenizing] tendency, and doubt the distinctive identity of psychology in India” (D. Sinha, 1993, p. 40).

CHINESE ‘RELEVANCE’

While strikingly similar to the Indian example, the development of the discipline in mainland China differs markedly in other respects.⁹ Between the establishment of the Chinese Psychological Society (CPS) in 1921 and the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, Chinese psychology was unmistakably Western. However, with the coming to power of the Communist Party, Western psychology was repudiated in favor of Soviet psychology: reductionist Pavlovianism and a studied avoidance of social problems were now the defining features of psychology in China. But by the late fifties, a rising tide of ultra-leftism resulted in a critique of what were seen to be the bourgeois underpinnings of psychology *per se*: “biologization” and “abstractionism” (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society, 1983, p. 170). The Twelve-Year-Plan of 1958 – according to which psychology was defined as a basic science – made the discipline a target for the Anti-Rightist Movement, which emerged in reaction to Mao Zedong’s liberal Hundred Flowers Campaign. The two-pronged criticism was that the use of Pavlovian theory to explain the contingencies of human behavior undermined the assumptions of socialist education, while the dry experimentalism of the discipline relied on variables that did not obtain in the real world. In the context of a developing country with industrial, technological and scientific ambitions, psychology seemed little more than a „luxury’ science (Ching, 1984). The effect of the so-called „Criticism Movement’ was to force progressively more psychologists to familiarize themselves with Marxist and Maoist thought, after which they developed a dialectical materialist understanding of the discipline. Nonetheless, the mounting skepticism of the discipline was realized to devastating effect on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. In 1965, Yao Wenyan – the Communist Party’s propaganda chief and one of the notorious Gang of Four – wrote an article under the pseudonym Ge Mingren („The Revolutionist’) that dismissed psychology as bourgeois gobbledygook and led to its eventual banning (Petzold, 1987). In the ensuing “ten years of calamity”, psychologists were routinely harassed and

⁹ China, of course, is not a Third World country. It is included here as an elaboration of the Asian call for ‘relevance’.

imprisoned (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society, 1983, p. 171); it was only at the 1978 Baoding meeting of the CPS that the discipline's standing was restored.

The remarkable collapse of psychology in the face of the Cultural Revolution has been attributed to the discipline's susceptibility to political influence (Ridley, 1976 cited in Petzold, 1987). This may explain why Chinese psychologists later cautioned against the wholesale renunciation of Western psychology so that, "[u]nder the guidance of the Four Fundamental Principles, on the basis of scientific research... a hundred flowers [may] blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society, 1983, p. 185). Before any thought could be given to the potential contribution of psychology to the advancement of Chinese society, the significance of the basic science had to be appreciated. After all, the fallout from the Cultural Revolution resulted from "the inability to distinguish between political and academic problems" (ibid., p. 184) – hence the importance of distinguishing "between popular and vulgar, scientific and not scientific" (ibid., p. 183).

Chinese psychology continues to tread an awkward path in its attempt "to establish a psychological system possessing our national features and meeting the demands of our socialist construction" (ibid., p. 187). Having experienced a traumatic crisis of 'relevance' between the mid-fifties and mid-seventies, it finds itself in the curious position of wanting "to prevent interference from both left and right, inspire enthusiasm, stride proudly ahead, work wholeheartedly for the cause of psychology, in order to contribute to the magnificent cause of socialist modernization" (ibid., pp. 186-187). Sustained talk of 'relevance' appears to be a thing of the past, but outside mainland China – in Taiwan, for instance – the problematics of *yanghua* (literally, Westernized) psychology remain firmly on the agenda (Yang, 1997).

FILIPINO 'RELEVANCE'

Of all the Asian countries, the indigenization project has proven most successful in the Philippines (D. Sinha, 1997). Initially a Spanish colony for more than 300 years, the Philippines eventually achieved independence from the United States in 1946. By then psychology – which was introduced as a subject at the University of the Philippines in 1908 – was thoroughly American (Montiel & Teh, 2004). With Filipino nationalism in the ascendancy during the early years of independence, however, psychologists began directing their attention towards the study of Filipino national identity and personality (Lagmay, 1984). By the 1960s, the general ill-suitedness of American psychology to the Filipino context was

widely acknowledged; with much problematizing and little theorizing, what was lacking was a coherent alternative (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

The Philippines was deeply affected by the worldwide student protests of the late sixties and early seventies (Lagmay, 1984). The lingering imperialism of American culture was the shared object of disenchantment; there was a growing feeling that the dominance of the English language in education – in psychology, for example – needed to be challenged by installing the national language as the medium of instruction. Nationwide teach-ins, demonstrations and violence culminated in the imposition of martial law in September 1972. By then, Virgilio Enriquez had just returned to the country after completing his PhD in social psychology at Northwestern University. If anything, his American education made him even more Filipino-centered in his teaching and research, and he set about establishing the Philippine Psychology Research House. In 1975, he chaired the First National Conference of Filipino Psychology at which the guiding principles of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) were officially enunciated (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). In January 1976, Enriquez founded the National Association for Filipino Psychology (Lagmay, 1984). The association sought deliberately to expand its membership beyond psychology, opening its doors to anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers and others besides, consonant with Enriquez's adage, "Psychology is too important to be left to the psychologists alone" (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 54).

Sikolohiyang Pilipino is essentially a site of protest against "a psychology that perpetuates the colonial status of the Filipino mind, the exploitation of the masses, and the imposition of psychologies developed in industrialized countries" (Church & Katigbak, 2002, p. 131). It is constellated around four core themes, namely, an understanding of identity and national consciousness with a social psychological focus on an indigenous conceptualization of the psyche; an awareness of and involvement in social issues; attention to national and ethnic languages and cultures; and the development of psychological practices appropriate for the Filipino context (Enriquez, 1993). Notwithstanding the 'social' and 'cultural irrelevance' of its parent discipline, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* does not promote the outright rejection of Western psychology: it encourages – in some versions – an etic-emic hybridism, which Enriquez (1979 cited in Church & Katigbak, 2002) championed by distinguishing between 'indigenization from within' (utilizing native psychology) and 'indigenization from without' (adapting foreign psychology).

LATIN AMERICAN 'RELEVANCE'

On three separate occasions, Ruben Ardila asserts that “science is not a cultural value in Latin America” (1982, pp. 105, 112 & 120). He emphasizes the heterogeneity of the region and its psychological traditions, and concludes that “there is no such thing as „Latin American psychology”” (ibid., p. 103). Influenced broadly by psychoanalysis, „French’ psychology and Skinnerian behaviorism, psychologists in Central and South America have tended historically to apply themselves to the specific problems of their countries – by the 1920s, in fact, the discipline was already an established part of public life (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010).

When popular movements against economic oppression sprung up in the 1950s and 1960s, the social sciences proved especially receptive, articulating critical perspectives committed to social justice. In psychology, the Liberation Social Psychology (LSP) movement was launched and drew on ideas from – among other strands – liberation theology and critical pedagogy (Burton & Kagan, 2005). Apart from the service orientation of Latin American psychology, the emergence of LSP was made possible through an autonomously functioning intellectual culture that distanced itself from state interests (Jiménez, 1990 cited in Burton & Kagan, 2005). The term *psicología de la liberación* was first used in print form in 1976, before gaining widespread currency through the works of the assassinated Jesuit priest and Spanish social psychologist, Ignacio Martín-Baró, and the Venezuelan social psychologist, Maritza Montero. Forged amid the maelstrom of Argentina’s Dirty War, the Chilean coup of 1973, the Salvadoran Civil War and the experiences of subjugated communities in Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and Brazil, the birth of LSP challenged the „social irrelevance’, universalistic pretentiousness and moral apathy of empirical social psychology (Burton & Kagan, 2005).

Yet Martín-Baró’s terms of reference went beyond social psychology: he argued that “psychology as a whole: theoretical and applied, individual and social, clinical and educational... has not only remained servilely dependent when it has needed to lay out problems and seek solutions, but has stayed on the sidelines of the great movements and away from the distresses of the peoples of Latin America” (Martín-Baró, 1996, p. 17). The stakes were high indeed: Martín-Baró is on record as having said to a North American colleague, “In your country, it’s publish or perish. In ours, it’s publish *and* perish” (Aron & Corne, 1996, p. 2, original emphasis). For Martín-Baró, the “historical misery” of Latin American psychology was the product of, firstly, a “scientistic mimicry” through which the discipline hoped to secure a status comparable to its North American progenitor (Martín-Baró, 1996, p. 20); secondly, a deficient epistemology that canonized positivism,

individualism, hedonism, homeostasis and ahistoricism; and thirdly, an unhelpful dogmatism founded on false binaries. He advocated, instead, a new disciplinary horizon supportive of liberation, the perspective of the oppressed and a praxis unashamed of its politics.

ISLAMIC 'RELEVANCE'

A significant but underemphasized intellectual movement of the 20th century is the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) project. After World War II, most Muslim countries had attained independence from their erstwhile colonial masters. But by the late 1960s, a new milieu arose, which, exemplified by this political autonomy, the sudden advent of „black gold’ *nouveaux riches* and widespread agreement regarding the failures of capitalism and socialism, hastened calls for the development of „Islamic’ solutions to the social problems of Muslim countries (Haneef, 2005). The *ummah* (worldwide Muslim community) was in a state of „malaise’ epitomized by political disunity, economic underdevelopment and religio-cultural alienation – and the root cause of the malady was considered to be the knowledge enterprise itself. For the Palestinian-American philosopher, Ismail al-Faruqi, the Muslim world had committed the error of embracing a “bifurcated” educational system that differentiated between religious and secular knowledge (1988, p. 16). The result of this distinction was that the non-religious sciences – including the social sciences and humanities – were imported mindlessly from the West. By contrast, the Malaysian philosopher, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, reasoned that the principal cause of Muslim backwardness was the “loss of *adab*” of Muslims themselves (1985, p. 99). Because of this loss of discipline “that assures the recognition and acknowledgement of one’s proper place in relation to one’s self, society and Community” (ibid.), Muslims were no longer able to discriminate between categories of knowledge.

Although al-Attas “is credited for laying the theoretical foundation of the IOK... while [al-]Faruqi’s contribution is more on the methodological side” (Haque & Masuan, 2002, p. 279), the chief implication of their respective positions was the same: knowledge was not neutral. Two things needed to be done: first, the IOK project had to be adequately defined, rationalized and theorized; second, the disciplines themselves were to be subjected to its processes. International conferences were held in Saudi Arabia in 1976 and 1977, with economics and education the first disciplines considered for Islamization (Haneef, 2005). In the case of education – the logic applied to all disciplines – it was argued that “[t]he foreign elements and disease [would] have first to be drawn out and neutralized before the body of knowledge [could] be remolded in the crucible of Islam” (al-Attas, 1979, p. 44). By 1979,

psychology had become a candidate for Islamization. In his celebrated *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, the Sudanese psychologist, Malik Badri (1979), argued that in their eagerness to locate themselves beneath the aegis of science Muslim psychologists had parroted Western psychological theories and practices that were inapplicable in Muslim countries. For Badri, the dilemma involved a tension between the psychological theories of pre-modern Muslim scholars and those of contemporary mainstream psychology (Haque & Masuan, 2002).

A direct result of the 1977 education conference was the establishment of 'Islamic universities' in Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur in the early 1980s (Haneef, 2005). Muslim social scientists from around the world joined Kuala Lumpur's International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), eager to immerse themselves in the IOK project. Badri himself joined IIUM's Department of Psychology in 1992 and became the first faculty member to introduce an undergraduate course on Islam and psychology. Despite his relocation to al-Attas' International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) – a research institute of IIUM – he continued to publish in the area of psychology and religion. Other international figures from Algeria, Iraq, India and the Sudan subsequently taught Islamic psychology at the university (Haque & Masuan, 2002).

Attempts at fashioning a *bona fide* Islamic psychology have taken one of three forms (Malkawi, 1998): a critical revision of Western psychology, an elaboration of the classical Islamic legacy and a textual analysis of Quranic references to the word *nafs* (soul / psyche). A theocentric-individualistic outlook marks all three strands and is evident in a landmark special issue on Islamic psychology in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. Badri (1998), for example, juxtaposes the West's failed campaigns against drug abuse with an Islamic treatment approach based on religious observances; Alawneh (1998) defines human motivation in largely spiritual terms; for Shehu (1998), human development is always subject to God's Will; while, for Achoui (1998), psychology has intrinsic religious, philosophical and moral dimensions. The theocentric individualism of these accounts emulates a similar penchant in a well-known earlier attempt at articulating a framework for an Islamic psychology (al-Attas, 1990). Outwardly asocial, contemporary formulations of Islamic psychology problematize the 'cultural relevance' of Western psychology.

AFRICAN 'RELEVANCE'

Psychology came to Africa during colonial times in the form of ethnopsychology, when nineteenth century writers, philosophers and anthropologists set about reifying a world of

newfound curiosities (Nell, 1990). In fact, until the 1960s the discipline comprised little more than a motley collection of ex-colonists, expatriates, visiting scholars and, in the case of South Africa, white psychologists (Abdi, 1975). Even then, foreign researchers in cross-cultural psychology were more interested in theoretical questions than „socially relevant’ issues on the agendas of developing countries; in time, their expeditions on the continent would be viewed with no small measure of suspicion (Jahoda, 1973). The lack of African involvement was such that, by the early nineties, “the average black African is likely to declare that he has never heard of the term „Psychology’ in his life, or if he has heard of it, he is most likely to swear that he does not understand what it means” (Eze, 1991, p. 28).

In 1962 – with the exception of South African universities – not a single department of psychology existed in sub-Saharan Africa (Peltzer & Bless, 1989 cited in Nsamenang, 1995). It was only in the late sixties and increasingly during the seventies that African researchers in psychology started to emerge – at the same time that their colleagues in the West were becoming more reflexive about their own practices (Wober, 1975). Until then, psychological research in Africa had occupied itself primarily with the resolution of Euro-American disciplinary impasses – with the subtext of “mak[ing] more effective the African’s exploitation [and] advancing a „science’ of dubious relevance to African reality” (Bulhan, 1981, p. 27). Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s (1923) oft-cited *Primitive Mentality*, for example, in which he presented his thesis on the „prelogical mentality’ of „uncivilized communities’, became a seminal work that would inspire psychological research in Africa for decades. This line of theorizing was taken up by, among others, John Carothers (1951 cited in Richards, 1997), according to whom Africans did not use their frontal lobes, Carl Jung (1961 cited in Nell, 1990), in whose reckoning the African mind featured as something infantile and largely unconscious, and Octave Mannoni (1968 cited in Bulhan, 1981), who dismissed the struggle for independence as a reaction formation against the underlying „dependency complex’ of the African personality.

Psychological expertise was employed in the service of state and industry – both of which were ill-disposed to African interests. Although occupational psychology had developed two approaches in the study of adaptation to industrialization – one focusing on worker efficiency, the other on worker satisfaction – in Africa, more studies accorded with the first approach (Wober, 1975). Employed usually by industrialists, psychologists tended to endorse an economic outlook consistent with dehumanizing attitudes towards workers. In South Africa, “for the most part, psychological practice [was] a matter of treating individuals

as objects of political or management decisions not made by themselves” (J. Louw & Danziger, 2000, p. 59). Elsewhere – in Nigeria, the Cameroons, South West Africa and Ghana – it was surmised that Africans preferred the overcrowded living conditions that obtained in worker compounds (Wober, 1975).

Despite improvements in the post-independence years, neo-colonial designs remained. With the perfection of the means of production, crude racism grew more refined and “no longer dare[d] appear without disguise” (Fanon, 2006, p. 23). By the eighties – there were now twenty psychology departments in Africa (Serpell, 1984 cited in Nsamenang, 1992) – black psychologists trained in the Euro-American tradition continued to conduct the kind of research that had “long served as a bulwark of rationalisation for oppression” (Bulhan, 1981, p. 25). In the mid-nineties, a survey of twelve East and Southern African countries revealed that the orientation of their psychological services was still more Western than African (Mpofu, Zindi, Oakland, & Peresuh, 1997 cited in Mpofu, 2002). Psychological theories remained individuocentric, failing to capture the purported sociocentrism of African societies (Mpofu, 2002). At its inaugural meeting in July 2000, the Working Group on the Development of the African Psychological Society noted the lack of African participation at the International Congress of Psychology and concluded that “[e]ither we are marginalized, or not taken seriously at all” (Mpofu, 2002, p. 180).

Justifications for the ‘irrelevance’ of psychology in Africa are varied. Political instability (Nsamenang, 1995), overseas training (Mpofu et al., 1997 cited in Mpofu, 2002), an exodus of intellectual capital (Nsamenang, 1992 cited in Nsamenang, 1995), antagonistic peer relationships (Nsamenang, 1995), poor communication networks across the continent and beyond (Abdi, 1975), language barriers (Mpofu, 2002), methodological enigmas (Abdi, 1975), the Westcentrism of the discipline (Abdi, 1975) and, inevitably, the ‘social irrelevance’ of a “luxury oriented” discipline at odds with the prevailing conditions of hunger, disease and economic backwardness (Abdi, 1975, p. 230) – all have been advanced as explanatory factors.¹⁰

SOUTH AFRICAN ‘RELEVANCE’

Psychology in South Africa developed rapidly in the 1920s when John Dunston – a British psychiatrist and the country’s first Commissioner for Mental Hygiene – returned from an official tour of England, Europe and the United States. Having learnt that mental health care

¹⁰ In response to some of these reasons, a group of psychologists started to develop an indigenous African psychology in the mid-eighties – despite the allegedly open resentment of “white-washed” colleagues (Eze, 1991, p. 36).

extended beyond the provision of custodial services, Dunston introduced a series of interventions that included the appointment of psychologists and the standardization of intelligence tests for South African conditions (Minde, 1975). His views on African intelligence, significantly, were unflattering: Dunston believed that Africans were appreciably less intelligent than whites, were short on initiative, did not learn from experience and lacked not only the reasoning skills but also the requisite number of brain cells for becoming paranoid (Dunston, 1923 cited in Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). These notions dovetailed seamlessly with the concept of a „hierarchy of races’, advocated in 1920 by the Eugenics and Genetics Standing Committee of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. In need of scientific validation, here was a challenge tailor-made for the ministrations of psychological expertise (Louw, 1997 cited in Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008).

Yet the discipline’s most noteworthy achievement during the interwar years stemmed from its involvement in the Carnegie Commission’s Poor White Study. The so-called „poor white problem’ had raised concerns about sexual relations across the color line, which, it was speculated, resulted from the social equality of poor whites and “the great mass of non-Europeans.... This impairs the tradition which counteracts miscegenation, and the social colour divisions are noticeably weakening” (Grosskopf, 1932, p. xx). The poor white problem afforded psychologists the opportunity of demonstrating the usefulness of psychometric techniques in investigating such problems, which they accomplished with extraordinary success (J. Louw, 1986b). On the other hand, South African psychology had aligned itself from its inception with the precepts of scientific racism, which served, in turn, the mission of apartheid capitalism (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008).

The post-war period saw the institutionalization of Afrikaner apartheid rule and the increasing isolation of the South African academy from continental Europe and Britain. The National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) – established in 1946 and staffed initially by air force psychologists that had made important contributions to the mobilization effort – was instrumental in generating knowledge concerning the adaptability of African labor. Funded by state and industry, the NIPR’s unwritten mandate was to discover “how white-owned industries could best expropriate and exploit the labour of the African workforce” (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008, p. 80). In the 1970s, however, psychologists were called upon increasingly to defuse a rising working-class militancy. A discernible shift in political momentum was afoot, epitomized by the failure of Calvinist individualism, mounting local

and international condemnation of the wide-ranging depredations of apartheid policy and, in psychology, a looming revolt against an Afrikaner-led profession. The promulgation in 1974 of the Afrikaans Medium Decree contributed significantly to what would become the Soweto riots of 1976, followed in 1977 by the death-in-detention of the Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko. Along with the not inconsiderable regional turmoil of those years – particularly in Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia – from the mid-seventies onwards the apartheid state lurched from one crisis to the next in a steady trajectory of terminal decline.

By the late 1970s, South Africa's first black psychologist, Chabani Manganyi, had been writing about the black experience of political oppression for some years (see, for example, Manganyi, 1973). Manganyi's early contributions were made during the apogee of apartheid rule, yet it was only with the writing already on the wall that developments in the professional mainstream started reflecting what was going on in the country and beyond. From 1978, the Afrikaner whites-only psychology association, the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA), intimating a growing rapprochement with its rival association, backtracked on its founding ethos of racial separatism by holding joint conferences with the racially integrated South African Psychological Association (SAPA). Although the two societies buried their hatchet in 1982 to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA), the new association failed to convince many progressive psychologists who interpreted the merger as a pragmatic gesture aimed at consolidating statutory recognition of the profession. In 1983, the Institute of Family and Marital Therapy hosted an international conference at Sun City – a gambling and entertainment centre in a Bantustan “setting which is responsible for the break-up of thousands of [black] families” (Vogelman, 1987, p. 24). In protest, an *ad hoc* committee of disenchanted mental health professionals and students formed the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA), which dedicated itself “to work only with those who are the victims of oppression” (Anonymous, n.d., p. 2). In the same year, the critical psychology journal *Psychology in Society* was launched to “contribut[e] to serious debate and understanding of a psychology which is clearly at a cross-roads [and] is being torn apart by its inability to contribute meaningfully to a South African society increasingly in the throes of a deep structural crisis” (The Editor, 1983, p. 1). But by the late 1980s, the white-run OASSSA was deemed not radical enough by black psychologists who founded the Psychology and

Apartheid Committee instead.¹¹ With the state apparatus unraveling and political violence escalating, critical psychologists condemned the discipline for its „social irrelevance’, claiming that it was culturally insensitive (Holdstock, 1979, 1981a, 1981b), bourgeois (Turton, 1986), politically indifferent (Anonymous, 1986; Dawes, 1985; Liddell & Kvalsvig, 1990; Mauer, Marais, & Prinsloo, 1991; Strümpfer, 1981), economically inaccessible (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Vogelmann, 1987) and theoretically impoverished (A. Gilbert, 1989).

Almost a generation later, the debate about „social relevance’ continues unabated (Ruane, 2010). Accusations of „irrelevance’ refer currently to the racial profile of the country’s psychologists as well as the discipline’s response to post-apartheid policy directives.¹² Regarding the former, it is not that „race’ *per se* is taken as problematic – it is that racial identity overlaps with language proficiency, which has implications for a profession built on a „talking cure’. In a situation where forty percent of the population speaks either isiXhosa or isiZulu as a home language and eighty percent of psychologists are able to speak only English and/or Afrikaans, some have gone as far as to cast the mismatch as a human rights issue (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004), asking whether it is all mere “rhetoric” (Freeman, 1991, p. 141) and “political correctness” (Pillay & Siyothula, 2008, p. 734).

Although an increasing number of black African psychologists has been trained in the first decade of the post-apartheid era, there has been no corresponding decrease in the number of white trainees – it is the colored and Indian trainee numbers that appear to be on the decline (Mayekiso et al., 2004). Despite a resolution adopted in 2000 by the Professional Board of Psychology recommending the equal intake of white and black students for professional training programs, the situation is nowhere near parity (Pillay et al., 2008). Selection criteria have been criticized for being skewed in favor of educationally advantaged – i.e. white – applicants (Stevens, 2001), while selection panels are noticeably white-dominated (Mayekiso et al., 2004). Uneven racial distributions are plain to see in the „registered counselor’ practice category, which is also disproportionately white (Abel & Louw, 2009). Indeed, when the category was introduced in 2003, it was with the understanding that an earlier exit point in professional training would increase the number of skilled professionals on the ground, making basic counseling services more available to

¹¹ The outcome was that psychology’s resistance to apartheid was organized mostly along racial lines (Foster, 2008; Suffla, Stevens, & Seedat, 2001; Yen, 2008).

¹² By the end of 2006, in a country with a black African majority of eighty percent, less than fifteen percent of registered psychologists were black African (Pillay, Bundhoo, & Ngcobo, 2008).

economically disadvantaged communities throughout South Africa (Stevens, 2001).¹³ By 2013, however, most universities had discontinued their registered counselor programs – for a variety of reasons – in spite of evidence that primary level psychological services were sorely needed across the country (Petersen, 2004).

If these are some of the indicators of ‚relevance’, why does South African psychology still struggle to affirm its ‚relevance’ credentials? The explanations are numerous. Some cite the legacy of apartheid-era practices, the norms of training institutions and the generally slow rate of transformation within the discipline (Pillay et al., 2008). Others advocate the view that psychology is incompatible with African ways of being, that indigenous healers are the designated ‚psychologists’ in African society, that rural Africans prefer visiting traditional healers and that black students are attracted to more lucrative professions (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Pillay & Kramers, 2003). Another perspective is that psychology’s indifference to black working-class problems has alienated black students from the discipline (Mama, 1995; Pillay & Kramers, 2003). For example, the non-issue of poverty in clinical psychology literature – despite its links with two of the biggest social problems facing the country, namely, violence and the HIV/AIDS pandemic – is understood to be consistent with the profession’s pattern of aligning itself with the well-resourced (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

DISCUSSION

The foregoing cases reveal how concerns about ‚social’ and ‚cultural relevance’ emerged during periods of social unrest. In the American example, opposition to the Vietnam War and domestic racism had peaked; in Europe, students were rallying around a host of political causes; in China, a new regime proceeded to repress anything it deemed ‚bourgeois’; in Latin America, economic exploitation had occasioned a populist revolt; while in India, the Philippines, Africa and the Muslim world, struggles with postcolonial realities endured.

‚Relevance’ discourse, that is, did not emerge in a social vacuum. In the American case, disciplinary concerns about experimentalism had existed for many years, yet it was only in the sixties that these anxieties precipitated ‚the age of relevance’. A cocktail of Wundtian dualism, the Clever Hans phenomenon, the Hawthorne effect and the insights of Luther Bernard and Saul Rosenzweig in the thirties and Edgar Vinacke in the mid-fifties should have been enough to trigger a call for ‚relevance’. The reason it did not, had a great deal to do with the *zeitgeist*: by the late sixties and early seventies, a tipping point had been reached, brought

¹³ Registered counselor training takes four years while clinical psychology training lasts a minimum of six years.

on by an accumulation of political crises. Domestic wiretapping, the Watergate scandal and the American public's growing knowledge of the excesses of biomedical research resonated with underlying themes of invasion of privacy, distrust of authority and scientific accountability (Rosnow, 1981).

In the non-American appeals for „relevance’, however, a second factor must be considered. The international call for „relevance’ depended as much on an „ecological niche’,¹⁴ as it did on ill-conceived attempts to internationalize the discipline. Hiroshi Azuma's (1984) historical analysis of the development of Japanese psychology illustrates this latter point. He writes of an initial „pioneer period’ characterized by recognition of the discipline's potential that led to its basic introduction at textbook level. Then, in the „introductory period’, increased academic regard encouraged the intellectual elite to train overseas. In the ensuing „translation and modeling period’, student and researcher numbers multiplied while theories and research practice were modeled on those of the developed world; applications were as yet only successful in culture-free areas. An „indigenization period’ followed wherein culturally sensitive theories were developed and applied. An „integration period’ marked the final stage in the discipline's trajectory in which a synthesis of Western and Japanese theories and practices was effected.

With varying degrees of fitness, Azuma's model can be superimposed on almost all of the foregoing national and regional histories of psychology. Concerns about „social relevance’, that is, presented during the end-stages of „translation periods’ around the world when national and regional aspirations seemed to have been short-changed by a foreign disciplinary logic. Yet it was not the translation periods themselves that kick-started a series of „indigenization periods’: it was because psychological knowledge had been made to „travel’ beyond its political, cultural and intellectual center that it now appeared „socially irrelevant’ and in need of indigenization.¹⁵

It is due arguably to the strong association between conditions of social change and calls for „relevance’ that the latter presented most frequently in social psychology. After World War II, American preeminence in the field was inevitable: it was American money – tied to "a prescriptive model of what science should be" (Moscovici & Markova, 2006, p. xiii) – that had rebuilt European institutions. At the end of the 1950s, a rudimentary alliance

¹⁴ Ian Hacking (1998) coined the term to explain the phenomenon of ‘transient mental illnesses’, which flourish in accommodating environments but disappear as soon as their surroundings become inhospitable.

¹⁵ A similar process of indigenization occurred when the discipline first ‘traveled’ from Europe to its future heartland: the United States (Pickren, 2009).

existed between American and European social psychologists, mirroring the broader efforts of the International Social Science Council to coordinate social sciences internationally. By the early 1960s, however, the Americans encountered a problem: social psychology's links with sociology and cultural anthropology were fueling questions about its status as an independent area of study.

One solution was to promote the field internationally. In 1964, the Committee on Transnational Social Psychology was formed. With Leon Festinger playing a leading role, the Transnational Committee's founding premise was to generate a universally valid body of social psychological knowledge by encouraging colleagues around the world to conduct investigations in their own countries. Favoring the exploration of real-world phenomena, the Transnational Committee risked alienating itself from an American mainstream that had distanced itself increasingly from applied work (Moscovici & Markova, 2006). On the other hand, its assumption that internationalization involved the dissemination – and not the advancement – of knowledge threatened to alienate its international partners. Indeed, after several networking conferences and training seminars in Europe, Latin America and Africa, collaborative arrangements remained more „vertical' than „horizontal' (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996; Jahoda, 1973, 1975). On balance, the social needs of developing nations took a backseat to the theoretical preoccupations of American researchers (Tajfel, 1966). Because of unidirectional economic and intellectual sponsorship, the policy of cooperative cross-cultural research proved useful neither for developing nations nor for the „organic' development of social psychology in those countries (Tajfel, 1968).¹⁶

By the 1970s, appeals for „social relevance' had taken root in Western Europe (Israel & Tajfel, 1972), Latin America (Martín-Baró, 1996), Asia (D. Sinha, 1973) and Africa (Abdi, 1975). Driven by political crises and a push for internationalization that resembled “intellectual imperialism” (Moscovici & Markova, 2006, p. 186), a situation arose in which a debate begun by American psychologists had taken on intercontinental proportions (Moghaddam, 1987). The internationalization of the „relevance' question represented not only an interrogation of disciplinary authority but a broader questioning of political authority. In psychology as much as in politics, American and European models were seen as ineffectual in other parts of the world.

¹⁶ The involvement of social psychologists in the expansion of cross-cultural psychology cannot be ascribed wholly to their pursuit of a universal social psychology. There was also a desire to understand the shared traumas of World War II, a Cold War preoccupation with international relations (Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998) and a concern – paternalistic or not – with the challenges that accompanied political independence in the Third World (Jahoda, 2009).

And yet psychologists had been preoccupied with „social relevance’ since as far back as both World Wars and the Great Depression (Burr, 2003; O'Donnell, 1979; Rosnow, 1981). Even the 1936 founding of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) was in part a reaction against the perceived „social irrelevance’ of a psychological science that, until then, had failed to deliver on what the APA’s second president, George Trumbull Ladd, had imagined for the discipline – “that it is able and destined to contribute greatly to the welfare of mankind” (1894, p. 19). The dangers of origin-diving notwithstanding, it is no exaggeration to state that a history of „social relevance’ corresponds to a history of the discipline itself. In the chapter that follows, an attempt is made to explain this durability of debates about psychology’s „relevance’.

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CHAPTER 3: THEORIZING ‘RELEVANCE’

“Everything which if of use to mankind is honourable. I only understand one word: useful! You can snigger as much as you like, but that’s so!” (Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, from Crime and Punishment)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents three perspectives from which to understand the persistence of the ‘relevance’ question in psychology. First, it describes how disagreements about psychology’s *cognitive interest* – and subject matter – created an environment in which accusations of ‘irrelevance’ could flourish. Second, it asserts that applied psychology’s reliance on basic psychology for its scientific authority made debates about ‘relevance’ unavoidable. And third, it claims that the discipline’s longstanding antithesis to the social domain left it vulnerable to these debates particularly in recent decades of rapid social change. The chapter then proceeds to a discussion of the rhetorical significance of ‘relevance’, leading to a lengthy consideration of the discourse–materiality antinomy. It concludes with a formulation of the study’s theoretical framework and research questions.

PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS SUBJECT MATTER

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Jürgen Habermas (1972) describes three modes of scientific enquiry, each of which produces ‘interested’ knowledge. First, in the *empirical-analytic* (i.e. natural) sciences, hypotheses are tested via observation and measurement in order to generate nomological facts. Considered value-free, this type of predictive knowledge aids technical mastery of the environment. Second, in the *historical-hermeneutic* (i.e. social) sciences, the assumption is that human action – enabled by consciousness – is inherently meaningful to self and others. “Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation” (ibid., p. 309), which occurs through acts of interpretation. The investigator’s situatedness is acknowledged in that “[t]he world of traditional meaning discloses itself to the interpreter only to the extent that his own world becomes clarified at the same time” (ibid., pp. 309-310). Knowledge obtained hermeneutically has a practical – rather than technical – cognitive interest in a “possible consensus among actors in the framework of a self-understanding derived from tradition” (ibid., p. 310). And third, in the sciences of *social action*, law-obeying knowledge is also sought, although an attempt is made to produce a reflective consciousness in “those whom the laws are about” (ibid.). Here, the cognitive

interest is emancipatory and seeks liberation from “ideologically frozen relations of dependence” (ibid.).

Psychology has the unusual distinction of belonging to all three knowledge traditions. The discipline’s tardiness in demarcating its boundaries – its most enduring controversy has to do with the scope of its subject matter – encouraged the development of an astonishing array of fields and sub-fields. On the other hand, it also bequeathed a legacy of turf wars exemplified by incessant calls for ‘relevance’. For, despite ‘the individual’ being identified as the discipline’s proper focus of attention, its meaning was overextended to the point of promoting either a dilettantism of sorts or the fullest culmination of human disciplining yet. Sensation, perception, will, habits, consciousness, mind, brain, the unconscious, behavior, cognition, being, personality, attitudes, sociality, subjectivity, discourse and community were all advanced as the discipline’s proper starting point. The lack of consensus fueled one ‘revolution’ after another: a behaviorist revolution ended introspectionism, a cognitive revolution ended the ‘irrelevance’ of ‘rat psychology’, a discursive revolution (Harré, 2001) was touted as the answer to cognitivist reductionism at the same time that a dialogical revolution was expected to remedy the shortcomings of this second cognitive revolution (Shotter, 2001). But underpinning these disagreements about questions and methods was a basic dispute about the discipline’s legitimate cognitive interest.¹⁷ Committed variously to the interests of control, understanding and critique, psychology never managed to resolve this fundamental debate – which Kuhn (1962) took as evidence of its ‘pre-paradigmatic’ status.

Even if psychologists were to agree on a single subject matter and on how best to study it, appeals for ‘relevance’ would not subside. As historical constructions, psychological categories are not naturally occurring phenomena – they only appear that way because “the network of categories... has been adopted from the broader language community to which psychologists belong” (Danziger, 2010, p. 55). Standard historiography in the discipline formalizes this appearance by virtue of a tacit commitment to “a timeless human nature” (ibid., p. 56), sanctioning thereby the use of natural scientific methods in its investigation. Nonetheless, psychological categories are ‘human kinds’, which, because they permeate social life, are value-laden and able to operate upon their human carriers, altering continually the ‘things’ to which they refer (Hacking, 1995). A constantly evolving subject matter would

¹⁷ For example, in South African psychology, accusations of ‘social irrelevance’ have emphasized the incongruity of the discipline’s scientific predilections within investigative and applied contexts of institutionalized inequality. This amounts to a clash between technical and emancipatory cognitive interests.

only lead to further disagreements about questions and methods – and a return to debates about „relevance’.

PURE AND APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

There are two requirements for establishing a discipline: forming cooperative partnerships and producing socially useful knowledge (Danziger, 1987). In order to build effective alliances, new knowledge producers must prove their credentials to established producers. Knowledge must be created in forms that are deemed valuable and via techniques that are considered reputable – “even though such rituals may have more in common with magic than with science” (ibid., p. 2). In addition, knowledge products must address the interests of influential social groupings, failing which important sources of sponsorship can be lost. Subject to changing exigencies, the founding of a discipline is a politicized endeavor: practitioners must “accommodate themselves to the specific opportunities offered by a particular historical context” (ibid., p. 3).

In the early days of modern psychology, these mutually dependent but contradictory demands – the discipline-bound pursuit of scientific respectability on the one hand and the marketing of psychological products for public consumption on the other – regulated the activities of its practitioners.¹⁸ By exploiting “the mystique of the laboratory and the mystique of numbers” (ibid., p. 7), „pure’ research conferred upon the products of „applied’ research a scientific authority analogous to a competitive edge, which validated the important role the basic science played in the creation of expert knowledge.¹⁹ Then again, competing disciplinary pursuits also aggravated tensions between pure and applied research. Psychological applications were of two kinds: grand applications that had implications for social policy and localized applications with circumscribed possibilities. What told them apart was the distance between the setting in which the research was conducted („context of investigation’) and the setting in which its findings were to be applied („context of application’). Grand applications were characterized by a sizeable gap between the two contexts that could only “be bridged by a host of unproven and often unspoken assumptions” (ibid.); for localized applications, it was considerably narrower. The problem was that the rhetoric of universalist science demanded the magnification of the gap, whereas the

¹⁸ In South Africa – as in the United States – both demands were met by producing quantitative knowledge for use in educational and military settings.

¹⁹ Applied psychology tended to operate relatively autonomously, however, while pure psychology borrowed liberally from its practices. The two-step model functioned more as a rhetorical device that buttressed the scientific integrity of the discipline (Danziger, 1990).

discipline's predictive accuracy depended on its minimization. The net effect was to concretize a somewhat false opposition between pure and applied psychology – with the latter ostensibly the stronger performer on the 'relevance' index (Danziger, 2010).

Danziger's description of the origins of modern psychology delivers two important insights about the 'relevance' concept. First, it suggests that the history of 'relevance' is central to the history of psychology itself. The abiding interest in a 'relevant' psychology is symptomatic of an oversimplified distinction between its pure and applied versions. Psychology could not have established itself without addressing the social management priorities of bureaucratic elites: by making itself 'relevant', it secured a vital source of patronage. But it needed an 'irrelevant', apparently asocial foil whose scientific disinterestedness would underwrite the authority of its knowledge claims. The discipline, that is, traverses a polarity of 'relevance' that cannot be dissolved: the accusation of 'irrelevance' is the price it must pay for the preservation of its scientific eminence. Second, Danziger's account anticipates the remarkable internationalization of the 'relevance' question: the fact that modern psychology's development was constrained by the requirements of a particular social matrix dictated that its later introduction in societies that did not share those contingencies had to be experienced as jarring, alienating and therefore 'irrelevant'. Western liberal democratic polities, in which displays of naked power were unfeasible, required an alternative 'government of the soul' for which psychology's expert technologies proved well-suited (Rose, 1990). In countries with dissimilar social histories, however, the 'irrelevance' of an imported psychology was inevitable.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

It has long been observed that psychological theory struggles to explain social change. Gustav Jahoda noted that the issues psychology was accused of neglecting – he mentioned 'race' relations, violence and environmental degradation – were "mainly accompaniments or consequences of rapid social change" (1973, p. 466). Its theories lacked 'social relevance', which precipitated "talk of a crisis" (ibid.). Because the discipline's research methods were elaborated on the assumption that the individual – rather than broader social arrangements – was its proper subject matter, psychology was incapable from the outset of theorizing change. Having appropriated those methods from the natural sciences, it became ensnared in the quagmire of ahistoricity. The result was a lasting difficulty convincing newly independent

countries – most of whose developmental challenges were related to social change – of its „social relevance’ credentials.²⁰

In developed countries, a similar problem arose: rates of social change had accelerated to the point where “the over-all framework can no longer be taken for granted, and also because psychology is being challenged to cope with problems that are new or have become intolerable in the present climate of opinion” (ibid.). The methods that had proven successful in the study of the individual were devised in an era of socio-economic stability such that factors beyond the individual were not considered important. Faced now with the social turmoil that fueled both the political radicalism of the late sixties and early seventies as well as the postcolonial moment that was reverberating throughout the Third World, the field to which everyone turned for answers – social psychology – was not up to the task. Reckoned not social enough (Moscovici, 1972), its perceived failure to explain and intervene in the goings-on of the real world took on „crisis’ proportions while questions about „social relevance’ preponderated. During periods of relative prosperity, psychology had been able to survive with its metatheoretical inadequacies concealed. In times of discontent, this was no longer possible.

‘RELEVANCE’ AS RHETORIC

These explanations for the endemic presence of „relevance’ debates in psychology implicate the discipline’s relationship with materiality: should psychology engage with the „real world’ – and for what ends? What such questions overlook, however, is the nature of the engagement. The seeming inevitability of „relevance’ – which arises out of the seeming inevitability of materiality – obscures the fact that „relevance’ and materiality are approached, represented, constructed and transmitted discursively (Pujol & Montenegro, 1999). This is why deliberations on „relevance’ defy consensus: language permits the description of a single phenomenon in multiple ways (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), entrenching the term’s indexicality (Hessels et al., 2009; Kâğıtçıbaşı, 1984). Whereas Dawes (1986), for example, attempts a synthesis of research, theoretical, practical and political „relevance’, Biesheuvel (1991) distinguishes between its „communal’, „utilitarian’ and „sapiential’ aspects, while Moghaddam and Taylor list the key characteristics of an „appropriate psychology’ as “(1) self-reliance, (2) needs responsiveness, (3) cultural compatibility, (4) institutional feasibility, (5) economic suitability, (6) political practicality” (1986, p. 256). In the absence of an

²⁰ Conversely, the production of ‘socially relevant’ research in Africa, for example, was also seen as “a sophisticated blueprint for intellectual neo-colonialism by showing Western scholars a way to survive in Africa by serving the needs of the new ruling class” (van den Berghe, 1970, p. 334).

authoritative definition, how does one assess the merits of a term that vacillates between over-inclusive catchall and empty signifier?

As stated earlier, the purpose of this thesis is not to determine the working parameters of a genuinely „relevant’ psychology but to analyze accounts of „relevance’ – discourses – as articulated by psychologists themselves. It is the variability of these accounts – and the unending disputes they set in motion – that is of analytic interest. The credentialing of „relevance’ is achieved rhetorically, consisting of a series of persuasive acts seeking to convince an interested audience of “the expected value [disciplinary activities] will have for society” (Hessels et al., 2009, p. 388) – and therein lies the problem. „Value’ and „society’ are abstractions, while the „expected’ timeframe is no more definite. In the interim, various appeals are made to history, posterity, the present, the public good and common sense – all tendentious concepts themselves. Talk of „relevance’, that is, generates a rhetorical space in which competing arguments are constructed and dismantled without relent. Whether it is Biesheuvel (1987) insisting that the worth of knowledge transcends utility, European social psychologists refusing to abandon the traditions of experimentalism (Tajfel, 1972b) or McGuire arguing that the elevation of application-based research above theory-driven investigation is “as inelegant as trying to push a piece of cooked spaghetti across the table from the back end” (1965, p. 139), „relevance’ provokes dissent.

„Social relevance’, in particular, innervates this discursive world of contestation. Taking as fact a social hierarchy in which it makes sense to speak of human welfare in the first instance, „social relevance’ is a *cause célèbre* in divided societies. And just as South African intelligence testers set about proving the „social relevance’ of psychology by alleging the mental inferiority of black Africans in order to justify allegedly well-meaning policies of racial segregation, „social relevance’ is caught up in the web of power. There is little about it – or „relevance’ in general – that can be taken for granted: it functions as a rhetorical trope that legitimates, disqualifies and attempts to arrogate to itself the final word. After all, who can argue for the desirability of „irrelevance’?

‘RELEVANCE’, REALISM AND RELATIVISM

A self-perpetuating rhetorical “imperative to establish the claims of some versions over others” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 68) implies for many a maddening ontological relativism. Others may be offended at the suggestion that „relevance’ is more rhetorical than material. For many of apartheid South Africa’s critical psychologists, the international academic boycott of their white colleagues during the apartheid years – on the grounds that

the latter's work was „irrelevant’ – contributed meaningfully to the regime's downfall. „Relevance’ was more than „just’ rhetorical: it revealed itself tangibly when *real* people were *really* turned away at *real* conferences on account of *real* material concerns. To claim that discourses “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1976, p. 49) and that “there is nothing outside of the text” (Derrida, 1976, p. 158 quoted in Burr, 2003, p. 88) is to invite ridicule. Yet the position advanced by many social constructionists is not that the world beyond language is unreal but that the representation of that world through language is inevitable. The result is neither naïve realism nor unbridled relativism but a *critical realism* that is epistemologically relativist but ontologically realist. Discourse and reality, as it were, do not pass like ships in the night – but there is not a fully overlapping degree of correspondence either (Burr, 2003).

Like Parker (1992) before her, Willig aligns herself with this circumscribed relativism, distancing herself from the unrestrained relativism of “the postmodernist position [that] so easily slides into political conservatism” (1998, p. 96). By contrast, Collier commits himself to a stronger form of critical realism: despite its performative capacity, “[l]anguage can only be learnt by reference to reality. That indicates that there are other, prior means of access to reality. Not only is there no one privileged means of access to reality, language is not even the first runner” (1998, p. 48). Whether one speaks of consciousness, experience, practice or language, each of these is always *about* something: the pre-existing real world. For Collier, epistemological relativism means that “in a sense no one can be wrong about anything” (ibid., p. 56). A certain dogmatism arises that refuses to adjust itself even when practices in the world require it: not even “reality hit[ting] them in the face” can persuade non-realist pragmatists otherwise (ibid., p. 51).

It is a formidable argument in debates about „relevance’ that “bottom line” – i.e. material – issues are at stake (Edwards, Ashmore, & Potter, 1995, p. 26). In the Third World, for example, the „relevance’ movement signified a postcolonial uprising against the *material* injustices of racism, militarism, socio-economic backwardness, undemocratic politics and, in turns, American and Western cultural imperialism. Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that realist bottom lines must be presented *rhetorically* in the shape of „Death’ moves: “misery, genocide, poverty, power – the reality that *should not* be denied” (ibid., original emphasis).

Death moves create a moral universe comprising two prohibitions: “the Good that must not be undermined” and “the Bad that should not be justified” (ibid., p. 33). The Good kind avoids easy detection because it operates as the unstated corollary of the Bad kind –

according to which bad things *really* happen and relativist denials will only result in other bad things *really* happening too. The relativist rejoinder, however, is that despite “the overwhelming majority of the world’s politico-moral disputes [being] conducted exclusively by realists” (ibid.), it has not prevented the bad things from happening anyway. In fact, realist tropes that assume a pre-determined external reality can fuel “rhetoric for inaction” (ibid., p. 34).

When Death moves are contradicted, realists resort to ‘Furniture’ moves (pounding tables, pointing at trees etc.) that affirm the reality of the concrete world. Such appeals lay bare the innermost sanctum of the realist bastion: they are a last resort, an attempt to win the debate by moving it ‘beyond’ rhetoric. Vanquished “*vulgar*” relativists are rehabilitated as “*methodological* relativists, *moderate* constructivists, *pragmatic* pragmatists” (ibid., original emphases). And yet, for radical relativists, the persuasiveness of Furniture moves does not invalidate what they are, namely, *moves*. Petitioning furniture is not above rhetoric: it is a rhetorical device whose purpose is to state what cannot be denied (ibid.). Such “undeniability devices” construct a rhetorical arena in which potential rebuttals undermine themselves by being “long-winded and over-elaborate in comparison with the compactness and brevity of the devices themselves” (ibid., p. 28). The deployment of Furniture moves does not represent the triumph of realism but a concession that Death moves are not incontestable. In any event, the Furniture device (take, for example, the case of table-thumping) is not beyond refutation, falling foul of metonymy (thumped parts of tables stand for whole tables), mistaking individual instances for general categories (one table is the same as all tables) and confusing individual for collective experience (the experiences of all table-thumpers are equivalent).

As for relativists, they are accused of championing a bottom line reality of their own: the text itself. For Edwards and colleagues, this is a misconstrual of the constructionist position: “We do not claim that texts have an out-there meaning, any more than furniture has” (ibid., p. 32). The relativist objective is not to arrive at a “definitive reading” of the text “but to engage with consensus and argument” (ibid., pp. 31-32). Another criticism is that, since relativism assumes the equivalence of accounts, it does not support any politico-moral narrative – but in privileging this stance, it adopts a position nevertheless and becomes internally inconsistent. Relativists counter that this is a common misunderstanding:

There is no contradiction between being a relativist and being somebody, a member of a particular culture, having commitments, beliefs, and a common-sense notion of reality. These are the very things to be argued for, questioned, defended, decided, without the comfort of just being, already and before thought, real and true. (ibid., pp. 35-36, original emphasis)

Relativism does not glorify moral nihilism (Burr, 1998): it is morally courageous by insisting that claims about right and wrong be defended, taking issue only with those aspects of realism that are presented theologically in order to discourage argumentation (Edwards et al., 1995). Potter explains:

No! Please! How many times does it have to be repeated that „anything goes’ is a realist slur on relativism... Anything goes is an extraordinarily realist claim, which no relativist has any business espousing. It is a fundamental, timeless, contextless statement about the nature of causal relations, not all that dissimilar from the laws of physics or psychology. (1998, p. 34, original emphasis)

To chastise relativists for offering no guidance on how to choose between alternatives is to miss the larger point that there are no rules. Perspectives do not become hegemonic because they are „true’ but because they have been argued for convincingly. A belief in algorithms that can settle moral dilemmas reflects the realist assumption of a stable and knowable world.

For radical relativists, it is a rhetorical achievement of note when realist morality escapes detection as an *account* in the first place. They view realism as a sleight-of-hand rhetoric that pretends not to be: it is “the rhetoric of no rhetoric” (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995, p. 35), “a kind of magic... the signified without the signifier” (ibid., p. 37). Realism neglects the claim that „the real’ cannot avoid representation, becoming vulnerable to interrogation at the moment of its discursive enactment. Like science and magic, realist arguments attempt to divorce results from methods, creating the impression that the former is self-generating. By contrast, relativism places itself squarely in the sights of its own potential repudiation. As such, it does not stand in opposition to realism specifically but involves a meta-level critique of “realism and relativism alike, viewed as *rhetorical practices*” (ibid., p. 41, original emphasis). Unlike realists – who have selective recourse to relativist tools – relativists apply their tools reflexively and to the fullest degree.²¹

It was not by accident that debates about realism, relativism and „relevance’ emerged simultaneously in the early seventies in the form of intersecting social psychological crises (Foster, 1998). The realist–relativist dichotomy raises troubling questions about agency and change (Burr, 1998) – standout terms in the vernacular of „social relevance’. For relativists, agency is a discursive effect proceeding from occidentalist understandings of the self-contained individual – but, since discourse analysis asserts that the world can be other than what it is (Willig, 1998), the relativist undertaking starts to unravel. Moderate relativists end up eschewing radical relativism for “fear of losing our critical edge on important social

²¹ Still, the realist-relativist divide is somewhat contrived: the two camps disagree on the meaning of ‘reality’, while misconceptions regarding relativism abound (Burr, 1998). See Elder-Vass (2012) for a comprehensive discussion of the bottom line controversy.

phenomena” (Burr, 1998, p. 15). To succumb to what Parker calls “the slide into relativism” (1992, p. 22) hastens supposedly the descent into ‘social irrelevance’, whereas critical realism is believed to facilitate engagement with ‘socially relevant’ issues in the world *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

Leaving aside ontology, what does epistemological relativism – shared by relativists and critical realists alike – mean for a *history* of ‘relevance’? If history “relies on someone else’s eyes and voice” (Jenkins, 2003b, p. 14), amounts to nothing but “the labour of historians” (ibid., p. 8) and represents no more than “the history of historians’ minds” (ibid., p. 57), why bother with it at all? Not only is it impossible to ‘enter’ the mind of someone from the past – never mind the present – even if it were achievable, the actual rendering of that mind would still be subject to filtering processes involving contemporary categories of understanding. Historians draw on a range of epistemological, methodological, ideological and practical tools without which they are barely capable of thinking historically at all. In the end, the nonstarter that is empathetic historiography suggests that “all history is contemporary history” (Croce, 1941 quoted ibid., p. 48).

According to the relativist appraisal of history, it is never for its own sake: history is “constantly being re-worked and re-ordered by all those who are variously affected by power relationships” (Jenkins, 2003b, p. 21). Historical texts – as collections of statements – are aesthetic, narrative, political works that are as much imaginations as representations of ‘the past’.²² There exists “a *politics* with regard to the statement, and... the *text* is the result of this *politics* (Ankersmit, 1990, p. 277 quoted in Jenkins, 2003a, p. 48, original emphases). ‘History’ – being no more than an *account* of ‘the past’ – is an empty signifier whose meaning depends on its “filling up... by those with the power to do so” (Jenkins, 2003a, pp. 35-36). Equating it with ‘the truth’ “is already to figure that which has merely occurred before now into a shape, a form, a unity and, quite often, a content, a direction and a significance” (ibid., p. 35). Foucault’s argument is similar: “truth isn’t outside power... [it] is a thing of this world... to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (1980a, pp. 131-133).

²² ‘The facts’ do not speak for themselves – hence the commonplace of a single set of historical sources generating a plethora of divergent historical accounts. For example, were the 1960s “a decade of trauma or years of banality? Or Joy? Or was it *really* a lazy decade, a sort of snoozy-doozy decade, or was it, *really*, the Swinging Sixties” (Jenkins, 2003a, p. 51, original emphases)? ‘Facts’ by themselves are meaningless, acquiring significance only after interpretation and interpolation into the body of a narrative structure – and the interpretative act, by definition, is never positionless.

For relativists, history still matters. Its purpose is not to be definitive but to celebrate failure. Derridean infidelity towards the historical text – in other words, getting it deliberately „wrong’ – is necessary “so [that you can] open it up beyond its own attempted closures so as to make it yours” (Jenkins, 2003a, p. 26). Besides, nonaction is only a special kind of action. The past is something to be claimed – “epistemological frailties” (Jenkins, 2003b, p. 13) notwithstanding – because “we as human agents find ourselves within a context in which things are always already going on or being done” (Willig, 1998, p. 96). To leave the past to its own devices is to allow someone else to claim it unchallenged; as with anything in life, the past is “to be argued for, questioned, defended, decided” (Edwards et al., 1995, pp. 35-36). The “mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath” is to be avoided, a “will-to-forget” that has its roots in a felt need for renewal (Gandhi, 1998, p. 4). Indeed, since accounts of „relevance’ in South African psychology lack a meaningful sense of historical consciousness (see Brock, 2006), the study’s attentiveness to history is justified.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The question of „relevance’ evokes a longstanding controversy regarding the relationship between discourse and materiality. In particular, this chapter has presented two positions that can be summarized as follows: 1) a micro social constructionism that is radically relativist and favored by discursive psychologists, and 2) a macro social constructionism that is moderately relativist but preferred by critical realists. The former is concerned with the use of language in interpersonal contexts, while the latter addresses issues of practice, materiality, historicity and subjectivity (Willig, 2008). Both perspectives are epistemologically relativist, although critical realists insist on a realist ontology. Since the dispute is internally insoluble, only two solutions are possible, namely, outright rejection of the terms of reference or a synthesis of the poles. For Michael (1999 cited in Burr, 2003), the realist-relativist dichotomy – like other dualisms – is representative of forms of analysis favored in patriarchal societies. But for Wetherell and Potter (1992), the way out is to draw together „top down’ (Marxist-Foucauldian) and „bottom up’ (interpretative repertoire) approaches.²³

This thesis adopts the compromise position. Taking its cue from Wetherell and Potter (1992), it considers ways of speaking about „relevance’ as being inseparable from wider social practices. Although discourses about „relevance’ call into being a range of subjects and objects – „politically progressive psychologists’, „black Africans’ and so on – these

²³ Wetherell and Potter justify the combination of Foucauldian genealogy with Marxist ideology on the grounds that, in a Foucauldian approach, “[t]oo much seems to be lost when the subjects of history are replaced with of power” (1992, p. 86), while a Marxist reading ignores “the mobility of discourse” (ibid.).

discourses are rooted in a world where subjects and objects already exist. Consequently, the analytic chapters are concerned as much with the construction of „relevance’ discourses as with the particular historical milieux that coincided with the emergence of those discourses. But this distinction between the discursive and non-discursive realms should not be interpreted as suggesting a realist bottom line. The distinction is made for analytical – not empirical – reasons, while it makes no sense among discourse analysts to argue that one domain is „more real’ than another (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In fact, the theoretical framework approaches radical relativism with its contention that the „real’ world does not disclose itself other than through its discursive representations. Ultimately, however, the study shelves the ontological question. A definitive statement on the existence of a bottom line reality is not an essential requirement for this thesis – notwithstanding the fact that scores of discourse analysts have been unable to resolve the conundrum in a universally satisfying manner.

And yet judgmental relativism is disavowed. The discursive spaces within which reality is represented already possess criteria for the acceptance or rejection of statements (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). What the repudiation of judgmental relativism symbolizes is the unattainability of positionlessness, which implies that the merits of „relevance’ and „irrelevance’ are “the very things to be *argued* for” (Edwards et al., 1995, p. 35, added emphasis). A „relevant’ South African psychology is not *inherently* preferable to an „irrelevant’ one, nor is „irrelevance’ *inherently* superior to „relevance’. Assumptions such as these present themselves as incontestable – with potentially „ideological’ consequences – apart from endorsing a Whiggish conception of history „going somewhere’, of it having „a mind’, of it progressing – or regressing, in the Marxist course of events – towards an immutable end.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis locates itself within the field of critical psychology. Its purpose is to investigate the charge of „irrelevance’ that has hounded South African psychology since at least the late 1970s. Conventional accounts point to a Euro-American bias in theories of human functioning, professional indifference towards the life experiences of the black majority, and skewed racial representation of academics, practitioners and students of psychology in the country. What is lacking in these reviews, however, is an appreciation of socio-historical and discursive practices. In order to remedy these omissions, the preceding chapters have attempted to historicize – and thereby theorize – the notion of „relevance’ within the context

of an international and internationalizing discipline. What the coming chapters will provide is an analysis of the fluctuating discursive quality of „relevance’, along with an account of how this „floating signifier’ (Laclau, 1990) intersects with shifting socio-political conditions. Of course, it may be asked what a thesis of this kind has to do with psychology at all. To this one would answer: the question of „relevance’ influences directly the kind of psychology that is done and is not done (K. Danziger, personal communication, March 8, 2012). Accordingly, the research questions for the study are as follows:

1. What are the terms of debate within South African psychology concerning its „relevance’?
2. How have these changed over time?
3. How is „relevance’ articulated currently within the discipline?
4. And how can changes in South African psychology’s discourses about „relevance’ be understood?

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

There is no substitute for good scholarship. (Don Foster)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter begins with a discussion regarding the „operationalization’ of „relevance’. It provides a description of the data corpus, which consists of presidential, keynote and opening addresses delivered at annual national congresses of South African psychological associations between 1950 and 2011. It details the methods employed in analyzing the data set, namely, textual/rhetorical, discourse and social analysis, which form the components of Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis. Epistemological and ethical issues specific to discourse analysis are presented along with several comments on the study’s significance.

INVESTIGATING ‘RELEVANCE’

Where does one begin to collect data on „relevance’? Two possibilities suggest themselves immediately: 1) interview psychologists of different backgrounds and generations, and 2) assemble journal articles that speak directly or implicitly to the issue. In the first scenario, the problem that arises is that most psychologists from the 1960s and earlier are either very old or have passed on. As for journal articles, the first issue of the SAJP appeared only in 1970. Although monographs that speak to the question of „relevance’ can be used to supplement the data corpus, these are at a premium. Either way, the formative decades of South African psychology will be unaccounted for.

On the other hand, it is beyond the scope of this study to explore „relevance’ discourse dating back to South African psychology’s beginnings in the 1910s. In any event, documents corresponding to that period in the history of the discipline are rare and difficult to locate. This presents a third option: examining the annual congress proceedings of South African psychological associations. The earliest of these – the South African Psychological Association (SAPA) – was formed in 1948, the year in which the National Party (NP) won the elections and set about establishing an apartheid state. Indeed, 1948 is an analytically useful point at which to begin this study because it marked the dawn of a totalizing political rationality that would saturate the social fabric. In circumstances such as these, the

„relevance’ of psychology – understood as “the expected value [disciplinary activities] will have for society” (Hessels et al., 2009, p. 388) – becomes, understandably, especially salient.

But will the congresses of national psychological associations have anything useful to say about „relevance’? In answering this question, it is helpful to reflect on the reason these societies are established in the first place. Whether one views a psychological association as an assemblage of random psychologists or an agenda-setting guild, developments in such fields as *rhetoric of inquiry* make present-day claims of scientific disinterestedness seem more anachronistic than ever. A psychological society functions as a barometer not only of a given social milieu, but also of the discipline’s response to it. The founding of the APA is a fitting example. Fernberger contends that “seven men met and decided that it was worth while [sic] to form an association for the discussion of psychological matters” (1932, p. 3), creating the impression that the APA came straight from the minds of seven people. By contrast, the historian Michael Sokal submits that the APA “emerged at a particular time, in a unique social and institutional environment, and as the result of actions of specific individuals” (1992, p. 111). The APA itself acknowledges the role played by “[t]he progressive movement in politics” and other academic disciplines in the course of its founding (American Psychological Association, 2012, paras. 5 & 6). In fact, psychology has always depended on the patronage of powerful interest groups (Danziger, 1987), while national psychological associations – as keepers of the discipline – cannot disregard the needs of those groups. One can foresee, therefore, that concerns about „relevance’ – which end up determining the priorities of the discipline – will form an integral part of associational life.

DATA CORPUS

The empirical material for this study consisted of presidential, opening and keynote addresses delivered at annual national psychology congresses in South Africa for the period 1950 to 2011.²⁴ Since no records for SAPA’s 1948 and 1949 conference proceedings could be traced, the earliest collected address was from 1950, while the latest was delivered at the most recent national congress of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). In total, sixty-four speeches were collected. Of these, twenty-six were presidential addresses, seventeen were opening addresses, eighteen were keynote addresses and three were guest addresses.

Speeches were gathered from a number of sources: the National Library of South Africa (both its Cape Town and Pretoria branches), the Raubenheimer archive at Stellenbosch

²⁴ In contrast to ordinary conference papers that recount the research activities of their presenters, one would expect presidential, opening and keynote addresses to speak to broader issues of public interest. Discourses about ‘relevance’ should feature in such addresses.

University, the Mayibuye archive at the University of the Western Cape, the Pretoria branch library of the University of South Africa, the PsySSA archive, directly from the speakers in question or, in cases where the latter had passed on, from their surviving colleagues and acquaintances.

Not all of the collected addresses were selected for analysis. A handful of speeches amounted to no more than summaries of the speaker's research activities and were considered to be of limited analytic interest. Other addresses delivered by non-South Africans were excluded automatically on the assumption that only locally-based speakers would be able to speak authoritatively on the state of the discipline in South Africa. The result of these two exclusionary criteria was that the analytic data *set* (Braun & Clarke, 2006) consisted of forty-five addresses delivered by thirty speakers.²⁵ These differed in length from being as brief as one page (e.g. van der Merwe, 1961) to as long as twenty-five pages (e.g. du Toit, 1975). In view of the fact that addresses were delivered by a range of prominent personalities both within and beyond psychology, it was expected that their reflections on the „relevance’ question would populate a range of positions in the debate. It was anticipated further that, because such addresses are not ordinarily subject to the academic review process, they would also bypass the latter's homogenizing tendencies and possess a measure of discursive variability that might otherwise have been difficult to attain.²⁶ Figure 1 provides a tabular overview of the data set, by association and sub-period:

Sub-period	SAPA	PIRSA	SAPA & PIRSA	PASA	OASSSA	Psychology and Apartheid	PsySSA
1950-1961	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
1962-1977	1	14	-	-	-	-	-
1978-1981	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
1982-1993	-	-	-	7	3	0	-
1994-2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	9

Figure 1. Number of addresses analyzed, by association and sub-period²⁷

²⁵ The discrepancy is due to the fact that some speakers served multiple presidential terms while others were invited to give keynote addresses at more than one congress.

²⁶ Variability of accounts is an important consideration in discourse analytic studies (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

²⁷ Two keynote addresses from Psychology and Apartheid Committee congresses were located but were excluded from the data set on the grounds that they were delivered by non-South Africans.

The division of the analytic period under consideration (1950 – 2011) into sub-periods corresponds to the founding dates of South Africa's various psychological associations.²⁸ It was in 1962 that SAPA split on the „race' question pertaining to its membership, resulting in the establishment of the whites-only, Afrikaner-dominated Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). Until then, SAPA's Afrikaner cabal had felt for years like “strangers”²⁹ in an organization it understood to be run by English-speaking colleagues. But the declaration of a republic in 1961 and South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth infused the Afrikaner faction with renewed purpose. The National Party may have been running the country since 1948, but because it had won that year's elections on a minority of votes, it was forced to temper its actual expression of apartheid ideology. Now, however, with the country no longer beholden to the British Empire, the NP gave progressively freer rein to the articulation of its political philosophy – a change of strategy that, it will later be seen, filtered through the contents of PIRSA presidential addresses.

By the mid-seventies, the pendulum had swung in the opposite direction: with the creation in 1974 of the first Professional Board for Psychology, the existence of two national associations for psychologists was no longer tenable. Moreover, a concatenation of local unrest, international condemnation of apartheid rule and several regional civil wars created new pressures for the white Afrikaner government that precipitated a softening of PIRSA's position on racial segregation. Starting in 1978, it began holding joint congresses with SAPA with which it merged in 1982 to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA). In the following year, the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) was founded by progressive health care workers in protest against the hosting of a family therapy conference in the then independent homeland – or so-called *Bantustan* – of Bophuthatswana. The more radical Psychology and Apartheid Committee was established shortly thereafter with a predominantly black membership. By 1994 – the year of South Africa's first democratic elections – PASA, OASSSA and the Psychology and Apartheid Committee had disbanded and a new body was established to represent the interests of the country's psychologists: PsySSA.

²⁸ This scheme also anticipates the arrangement of the analytic chapters to follow.

²⁹ Interview with P.M. Robbertse, former PIRSA president, May 12, 1982, p. 14. Accessed December 22, 2010 from the Raubenheimer archive, Special Collections, J.S. Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University. All interviews cited in the study were drawn from this archive. Professor Naas Raubenheimer, a former PIRSA president himself, donated a collection of audiocassettes and transcripts of interviews with important figures in South African psychology to Stellenbosch University. I am indebted to Mimi Seyffert (Special Collections) and Desmond Painter (Department of Psychology) for facilitating my access to this material.

RHETORIC OF INQUIRY

From its classical beginnings, rhetoric was vilified as “a shabby little weasel word in most circles” (Harris, 1991, p. 282), “the refuge of... the demagogue” (Nel, 1998, p. 105). Philosophers today have not forgotten the Kantian admonition either – that rhetoric “is not worthy of any respect at all” (Kant, 2000, p. 205). Nonetheless, since the 1950s, rhetoric has undergone something of a revival. When Nietzsche and Heidegger questioned the Cartesian distinction between subject and object, they could not have imagined their brand of epistemological relativism being taken up by later generations of rhetoricians who would make the case that their traditional stomping grounds of law and politics could be extended to science itself (Gross, 1990; J. S. Nelson, Megill, & McCloskey, 1987). Since rhetoric was an essential ingredient of any discipline, science was in no position to demur (Gross, 1990). When Kuhn (1962) announced the irrationality of science’s paradigm shifts and, later, Feyerabend (1975) gainsaid the unity of scientific method, philosophy – the archenemy of rhetoric – had contrived to put the rhetors back in business. Soon enough, fields as disparate as architecture, biology, economics (J. S. Nelson et al., 1987) and even mathematics (Davis & Hersh, 1987) would be subjected to rhetorical examination.

Rhetoric of inquiry insists that, despite the splintering of the academy into myriad fields, these remain united in their shared dependence on argumentation. Rhetorical moves – appeals to common sense, authority or metaphor, to name a few – are part and parcel of the academic life. On the other hand, “[e]very field is defined by its own special devices and patterns of rhetoric – by existence theorems, arguments from invisible hands, and appeals to textual probabilities or archives – themselves textures of rhetoric” (J. S. Nelson et al., 1987, pp. 4-5). Scientific knowledge and „the facts’ are not one and the same thing: the former is a “product of professional *conversation*” (Gross, 1990, p. 4, added emphasis) that is shaped in laboratories, conferences, publications and countless other rendezvous. To produce scientific knowledge, one must answer three questions: Is the selected problem worth studying? How is it to be studied? And what do the findings mean (Gross, 1990; Nel, 1998)? The first and last of these questions are intrinsically rhetorical – especially arguments about worth, which approximate a rhetoric of „relevance’.³⁰ Hence, when interlocutors set about delimiting the parameters of „relevance’, they are reinforcing the edifice of science itself. Science without „relevance’ loses its rationale and ceases to be science at all.

³⁰ It is worth restating the study’s general understanding of ‘relevance’, namely, “the expected value [disciplinary activities] will have for society” (Hessels et al., 2009, p. 388).

What is meant by rhetoric of science, then, is “the study of the role of discourse in science, particularly in its more clearly suasive functions – galvanizing, resolving, or avoiding disputation” (Harris, 1991, p. 287). Rhetoric of science augments social constructionism’s central insight of discourse as constitutive by drawing attention to a particular kind of discourse – the persuasive kind – and to the concept of *audience* that persuasion implies (Nel, 1998). Accordingly, the purpose of a rhetorical analysis of scientific discourse is to illuminate those textual features that attempt to convince an audience of a particular knowledge claim’s veracity. These means of persuasion (*pisteis*) are thought to be a function of the speaker’s authority (*ethos*), the audience’s emotional vocabulary (*pathos*) and/or the argument’s actual contents (*logos*).

Ethos is attained by acknowledging what has gone before – as in the literature review, for example – which anoints the speaker as someone worth listening to.³¹ Publishing in a respected journal or coming from a venerated research institution accomplishes the same. *Pathos* looms large in the world of science when one considers heated policy disputes and caustic peer review comments – embarrassing to science but not entirely surprising if one views “the objectivity of scientific prose [as] a carefully crafted rhetorical invention, a nonrational appeal to the authority of reason... the disciplined denial of emotion in science... a tribute to our passionate investment in its methods and goals” (Gross, 1990, p. 15). *Logos* involves *common topoi* – e.g. definition, comparison and cause – that are suitable for any kind of argument and *special topoi* – e.g. justice, virtue and worth – that are specific to particular kinds of argument. The special topics mentioned, correspond to *forensic*, *deliberative* and *epideictic* oratorical genres respectively. For example, when a scientific text presents previous science in a manner supportive of its claims, it is engaging in forensic oratory. When it attempts to recommend a future research direction, it functions as deliberative oratory. And when it attests to the soundness of its methods, it is epideictic (celebratory) oratory that is in evidence.

Science is accustomed to describing its facts and theories as discoveries – and therefore as unrhetorical, timeless and eternally true. In rhetoric, scientific verities are recast as *inventions*, reminding one of the impermanence of scientific assertions. Scientists also make use of *stasis* theory – an aspect of invention and typical of forensic oratory (Corbett & Connors, 1999) – that assists them in asking the kinds of orienting questions that can lead to convincing responses. First, does a certain entity exist (*an sit*)? Second, if it does, what is its

³¹ Parenthetically, this obscures authority’s complicated relationship with innovation – that hallmark of ‘good science’ necessary for the transmission of eminence.

nature (*quid sit*)? Third, by what laws is this entity governed (*quale sit*)? Stasis theory also considers the issue of *jurisdiction*: the independence of science in relation to broader society. Because different scientific texts privilege different *stases*, different conceptions of science are produced – as, for example, in the cases of Aristotle and Newton (Gross, 1990). But since *stases* can be said to „predate’ science, scientific interpretation becomes the stuff of rhetoric rather than science.

A final concept that merits attention is *style*, which is described in critical discourse analysis via terms such as „grammar’ and „transitivity’ (Fairclough, 1992). Elements of style include linguistic parsimony, the passive voice and the third person narrative, which create an impression of „facts’ speaking for themselves. Here scientific prose denies itself the very mode in which it must express itself – as if language were nothing but an unwilling, self-effacing conduit.

The South African debate about „relevance’ is receptive to rhetorical analysis. In terms of *stasis* theory, for example, Biesheuvel problematizes the existence (*an sit*) of „relevance’: “[i]t is a relative concept, contingent upon a number of often contradictory circumstances.... What is relevant to what needs to be done or said today may no longer apply tomorrow” (1991, p. 133). Conversely, for Anonymous, “[a]n important criterion for the relevantizing of psychology in South Africa would be the degree to which the behaviour of especially the majority is studied within the context of racial capitalism” (1986, p. 82). Anonymous takes the existence of „relevance’ for granted and proceeds directly to the issue of definition (*quid sit*). Dawes (1986), meanwhile, answers a different question entirely by linking the „irrelevance’ of South African psychology to the political conservatism of the discipline (*quale sit*). For his part, the then National Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, confronts the matter of *jurisdiction* by threatening his audience that, “if the [profession’s racial demographic] targets are not met and if there are any indications that this is due to a resistance to changing practices, especially selection practices in higher education, then I will not hesitate in introducing quotas” (2001, p. 4). When the „relevance’ debate is taken up by people interested in different aspects of the problem, consensus is unattainable.

Indeed, at a disciplinary level, rhetoric is closely related to psychology: not only does it have its own psychology, the reverse is equally true (Carlston, 1987). In raising concerns about methodology in psychology, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca note that “[t]he theory of argumentation which, with the aid of discourse, aims at securing an efficient action on minds might have been treated as a branch of psychology” (1969, p. 9). On the other hand,

psychology intersects with rhetoric in three respects: semantically, psychological terminology can be imprecise in ways that encourage inaccurate inferences; in its not infrequent recourse to metaphor, the psychological narrative can breed factual embellishment; while, in respect of argumentation, psychological accounts are as beholden to the IMRAD blueprint³² as natural scientific ones (Carlston, 1987). Psychologists are no less rhetorically skilled than professional rhetoricians themselves.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Rhetoric of inquiry took off in the 1970s with the increasing number of radical sociological studies of science. Before Kuhn (1962), sociologists of science had tended to believe that scientific knowledge reflected objective truths about the world. Because there was no need to understand how scientists came to believe what they took to be *true*, they restricted themselves to analyzing the social factors that led scientists to propound *false* theories about the world (Wooffitt, 2005). In the seventies, sociology of science took a new direction. Sociologists began realizing that the study of failed scientific projects did not question the prevailing scientific hegemony. Besides, the history of science was a history of fallen truths: there was nothing to suggest that current scientific knowledge would prove any different and stand the test of time. These sociologists embraced a relativist methodology in order to study aspects of knowledge production that were considered beyond the traditional ambit of sociological investigation, while a shared interest in the accreditation of scientific claims united the numerous approaches to sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). Scientific disputes, in particular, became focal points because “the social processes which underpinned knowledge production were still in operation” and were therefore amenable to scrutiny (ibid., p. 14).

A seminal SSK study is Gilbert and Mulkay’s (1984) account of a controversy that erupted in an area of biochemistry known as ‘oxidative phosphorylation’. What they discovered – they called it ‘Pandora’s Box’ – was not that the world of scientific facts was shaped disproportionately by non-scientific influences. They stumbled upon a methodological anomaly: the presence of multiple, equally plausible versions made it impossible to produce a univocal sociological account in which “[p]articipants are allowed to speak through the author’s text only when they appear to endorse his story” (ibid., p. 2). Opening Pandora’s Box was not about revealing the ‘truth’ but about “setting free the multitude of divergent and

³² The suasive power of the IMRAD ritual – Introduction, Methods, Results And Discussion – cannot be underestimated: the textual organization of scientific papers functions rhetorically to suggest a naturally unfolding and therefore incontestable logic of discovery (Woolgar, 1980).

conflicting voices with which scientists speak” (ibid.). For Gilbert and Mulkay, the variability of accounts was not methodological noise but warranted study in itself. It suggested that the conventional belief in a perfect correspondence between language and reality was untenable and, further, that discursive practices were context-dependent, which strengthened their case for “the methodological priority of analysis of participants’ discourse” (ibid., p. 9). Much the same as rhetoric of inquiry, discourse analysis emerged from SSK as an alternative account of scientific knowledge production (Wooffitt, 2005).

Within social psychology, the discourse-rhetoric connexion is well established. In large part due to the work of the *Discourse and Rhetoric Group* at Loughborough University, rhetorical studies have advanced alongside discursive psychology – the latter an approach to discourse analysis developed by critical social psychologists to investigate the rhetorical organization of texts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Similar to rhetoric, which “has traditionally been concerned with those instances of formal, premeditated, sustained monologue in which a person seeks to exert an effect on an audience” (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 1), discursive psychology is interested in the action orientation of language. The unity of the field breaks down, however, on the question of agency (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In the poststructuralist scheme – which comes close to reifying discourse (Foucault, 1976; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) – the focus is on the discursive construction of identities and its social consequences. Broad social and cultural processes are of analytic interest rather than the use of language in interpersonal contexts. By contrast, an interactionist perspective drawing on conversation analysis and ethnomethodology concentrates on “the action orientation of text and talk in social interaction” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 105). Unlike poststructuralist discourse analyses – which treat discourses as totalizing forces that prescribe the available forms of talk – the interactionist outlook acknowledges the variability of talk across changing interactional settings. As a result, a third, integrationist strand seeks a compromise and is interested in the discursive constitution of subjects and objects as well as the *interpretative repertoires* that people draw on flexibly in their everyday social transactions (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Wetherell, 1998). The approach here is to “pursue post-structuralist questions with the analytic fervour of social psychologists, but in a domain of materials which have been most thoroughly explored by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 89).

Like other discourse analytic approaches, the discursive psychological tradition stresses the constitutive qualities of discourse vis-à-vis the social world (Jørgensen &

Phillips, 2002). As for the relationship between discursive and non-discursive realms, however, its position is more difficult to determine. Although it acknowledges the *constitutedness* of discourse, in comparison with Fairclough's (1995b) critical discourse analysis (CDA),³³ discursive psychology under-theorizes on aggregate the historical and social embeddedness of discursive practices.³⁴ For Fairclough, when discourse analysis is focused exclusively on the text, it must be inadequate. In his *three-dimensional* model, he delineates a trio of separate yet interconnected levels of analysis for every instance of language use (Fairclough, 1992). First, an analysis of what he terms a *discursive event* must focus on its linguistic features. These include, for example, grammatical properties, metaphors and politeness strategies encountered at the level of the *text*. Second, at the level of *discursive practice*, the analysis should account for how discourses and genres are implicated in the production and consumption of that text. And third, at the level of *social practice*, the analysis must illuminate the social matrix within which the discursive event is located.³⁵ Here, non-discursive logics (e.g. economic, political, cultural) must be clarified via social analysis. The *order of discourse* should also be explicated, consisting of all the discourses and *genres* (e.g. advertising, news, interviews) circulating in a given social field (e.g. the media, the health service, universities). Antagonistic discourses within this order compete for hegemonic control over what Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 111) have called the *field of discursivity* – that is, the aggregate of meanings excluded by a dominant discourse. The presence of a *floating signifier* (Laclau, 1990, p. 28) – a discursive element that is subject to inconsistent ascriptions of meaning – is one indicator for the existence of a discursive order.

Discursive psychology succeeds in laying bare the contradictoriness of social talk whereas CDA attempts to unveil the ideological effects of discursive practices that create and perpetuate unequal power relations in society. In terms of the data set, both approaches offer analytical advantages. Discursive psychology is well placed to comment on the historical variability of discursive practices in South African psychology that have tended to mirror the vicissitudes of the national life – but given its attention to socio-cultural processes, CDA is better suited for making sense of extra-discursive phenomena. CDA is recommended also for

³³ There are several competing understandings of CDA, some incompatible with others. In this study, CDA refers specifically to Fairclough's model.

³⁴ Wetherell and Potter (1992) is a notable exception.

³⁵ Instead of discursive practices, social practices and discursive events, Fairclough refers elsewhere to "discourse practices", "sociocultural practices" and "communicative events" (e.g. 1995b, pp. 16 & 35).

the analysis of official texts and speeches (Antaki, 2009) and is able to validate its findings – unlike discursive psychology – through linguistic analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).³⁶

In contrast to other CDA schools that place emphasis on social reproduction (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), Fairclough (1992) is concerned with the phenomenon of *change* in both its discursive and social forms. This is of value to the present study because it attempts to link evolving discursive practices to their social correlates over the course of nearly three generations. According to Fairclough, discursive change is motivated by “the problematization of conventions for producers or interpreters [of texts]” (ibid., p. 96). Manifesting as contradictions, these problematizations “have their social conditions in structural contradictions and struggle at the institutional and societal levels” (ibid., pp. 96-97). Discursive events either reflect these social contradictions or challenge and resolve them through innovation – that is, discursive change – by using discourses and genres in novel ways or by importing them from other orders of discourse. At the level of the text, discursive change reveals itself as a temporary “patchwork effect” (ibid., p. 97) that acquires a certain seamlessness with the consolidation of the new discursive hegemony. Although the reconstellated order of discourse is but “the specifically discursual organisational logic of a [Bourdieuian] field” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 114),³⁷ the text ends up reworking earlier ones “and in so doing helps to make history and contributes to wider processes of change” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 102). Fairclough introduces Julia Kristeva’s concept of *intertextuality* to account for this quality of texts, namely, that they inherit past texts and shape future ones. Intertextuality implies, in the words of Kristeva, “the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history” (1986, p. 39 quoted ibid.). Or, to quote Barthes, in speech one is “both master and slave” (1982, p. 461).

Laclau’s (1990) notion of a floating signifier is also analytically useful for this study as it captures the indexicality of the term ‘relevance’. While he uses the example of ‘democracy’, Laclau’s line of reasoning is just as applicable to the signifier ‘relevance’. Transposing his argument about ‘democracy’, then, ‘relevance’ becomes

... ambiguous by dint of its widespread political circulation: it acquires one possible meaning when articulated with [‘scientific independence’] and a completely different one when

³⁶ Since interpretative repertoires “are pre-eminently a way of understanding the *content* of discourse and how that content is organized”, discursive psychology does not have a linguistic focus (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 90, original emphasis).

³⁷ For Bourdieu, a field is highly determining of the kinds of positions that can be taken up in it. For example, a field such as the university “imposes its specific determinations upon all those who enter it. Thus she who wants to succeed as a scientist has no choice but to acquire the minimal scientific capital required and to abide by the mores and regulations enforced by the scientific milieu of that time and place” (Wacquant, 2008, p. 268).

articulated with [„civic responsibility’]. To ‚hegemonize’ a content would therefore amount to fixing its meaning around a nodal point. The field of the [„relevance’ question] could thus be regarded as a trench war in which different political projects [science included] strive to articulate a greater number of [„relevance’] signifiers around themselves. The open nature of the [„relevance’ question] would stem from the impossibility of managing a total fixity. (Laclau, 1990, p. 28, original emphasis)

This passage accounts succinctly for the endless iterations of the „relevance’ debate. Temporary hegemonies are established only to be supplanted when the balance of power shifts during periods of “organic crisis” (ibid.). Meanwhile, the fluctuating order of discourse is reflective of broader political currents, which Fairclough theorizes at the level of social practice.

A detailed discussion of *discourse* is now in order. Some wonder provocatively whether discourse is a “noun, verb or social practice” (Potter, Wetherell, Gill, & Edwards, 1990, p. 205). Its meaning is difficult to fix, shifting with virtually every crossing of a disciplinary boundary. Discourse means one thing in linguistics, for example, but something quite different in poststructuralist social theory. Laclau and Mouffe commence their discourse theory by describing

... articulation [as] any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated. (1985, p. 105, original emphases)

On the other hand, conversation analysis (CA) assumes the existence of “often tacit reasoning procedures and socio-linguistic competencies underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of interaction” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 12). It takes as given the speaker’s agency – implied in concepts such as *turn-taking*, *repair* and *preference* – in creating structure within talk. Whereas poststructuralism reifies discourse, in conversation analysis „discourse’ suggests infinite flexibility and fails to account for the determining influence of the macro context.

The concept of an *interpretative repertoire* attempts to “take a more integrated stance towards traditions such as conversation analysis and post-structuralism” (Wetherell, 1998, p. 395). Wetherell and Potter (1992), for example, concede the constitutedness of „discourse’ by underscoring the importance of social theory to discourse analysis. They forego the term, however, in favor of „interpretative repertoires’ – defined as “broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images” (ibid., p. 90) – on the grounds that, unlike „discourse’, the idea of an interpretative repertoire suggests “that there is an available choreography of interpretative moves – like the moves of

an ice dancer, say – from which particular ones can be selected in a way that fits most effectively in the context” (ibid., p. 92).

Although he retains usage of the word „discourse’ and includes in his model a more fine-grained linguistic analysis of textual features, Fairclough’s understanding of discourse is broadly consonant with that of Wetherell and Potter (1992):

In using the term ‚discourse’, I am proposing to regard language use as a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables. This has various implications. Firstly, it implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation. Secondly, it implies that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, there being more generally such a relationship between social practice and social structure: the latter is both a condition for, and an effect of, the former. On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels.... On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive.... Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it. (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 63-64)

With varying degrees of success, the shared merit of Fairclough’s and Wetherell and Potter’s outlook resides in their having reconciled „top-down’ Foucauldian discourse analysis where “the subjects of history are replaced with rituals of power” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 86) with „bottom-up’ CA-style analysis “in which people are the active users of language” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 24). Both approaches succeed in viewing people as “simultaneously the products *and* the producers of discourse” (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 206, original emphasis). The paradoxical quality of language-use is not paralyzing but edifying – indeed, “the paradox is more convincing than its theoretical dissolution” (Billig, 1991, p. 9).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Since it draws on an assortment of rhetorical, discourse analytical and historical resources, the methodological framework for this study is best described as multiperspectival, which is consistent with the inherent “perspectivism” of social constructionism (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 155). The analytic frame, moreover, has precedent in Fairclough’s three-dimensional CDA model. Accordingly, the study defines discourse in the comprehensive sense set out by Fairclough (1992; 1995b) and Wetherell and Potter (1992) and understands by *discourse analysis* “an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices” (Fairclough, 1995b, pp. 16-17).

At the level of the text, extensive use will be made of Billig’s (1996) and Corbett and Connors’ (1999) contributions to rhetorical theory, which focuses on the gestures that “mobilize” discourse (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 105). Among other aspects, oratorical genres and means of persuasion are identified along with schemes and tropes pertaining to

rhetorical style. Attention is given also to grammatical properties such as transitivity and modality in addition to other textual features, including wording, metaphors and politeness strategies.³⁸

At the level of discourse practice, the study's objective is to focus on the production of the text rather than its distribution or consumption (Fairclough, 1992).³⁹ The study identifies discourses pertaining to „relevance‘ that are drawn on in the data set as well as pertinent instances of intertextuality in which a given text references other texts either explicitly or implicitly. In keeping with Wetherell and Potter's (1992) description of interpretative repertoires, the analysis seeks also to illustrate the flexibility of speakers' discursive moves in changing rhetorical and social contexts.

At the level of social practice, the study describes the orders of discourse generated by discursive practices. It takes stock of non-discursive practices – social analyses are based on an intensive reading of the history of South African politics and psychology – by elaborating the social matrix within which these discourse practices are constellated. Wetherell and Potter (1992) emphasize the importance of placing discourse in its proper context. Citing the work of the sociologist, John Thompson, they observe that “the analysis of ideology should involve three stages: first, the social scientist must describe the social field, history and social relations relevant to the area of investigation; then engage in some systematic linguistic analysis of the pattern of discourse; and finally, in an interpretative or hermeneutic act, connect the latter with the former” (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 105).⁴⁰

Awkward questions arise from this methodological framework. How does one prove that discursive and social practices stand in dialectical relationship to one another? Where does one draw the line between the discursive and non-discursive realms? And how does one analyze what is ‘outside’ discourse? The first question stems from the observation that CDA studies typically present social matrices as “the *background* for the discursive practices” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 89, original emphasis), which makes it difficult to envision

³⁸ See Fairclough (1992, pp. 234-7) for a description of the relevant features of a textual analysis. *Transitivity* attends to indicators of agency, causality and responsibility such as nominalization of processes and the use of voice (active or passive). The analysis of *modality* focuses on the expressed “degree of affinity” (p. 236) with propositions, such as when they are stated as subjective opinions or objective facts.

³⁹ See Fairclough (1992, pp. 232-4) for a summary of the three dimensions of discourse practice: text production, distribution and consumption.

⁴⁰ Although the three levels of analysis are presented separately here, the analytic chapters are not always structured in this manner – in fact, it is customary in CDA research to integrate the textual, discourse and social analyses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Moreover, the levels of analysis are not treated evenly for each address as it would have been impossible to provide an exhaustive textual/rhetorical, discourse and social analysis for every speech.

how change is actually possible. There are two reasons for this tendency. First, it is not uncommon for discourse analytic studies to describe methodological procedures in one manner only to execute them quite differently – this has contributed to the perception that „anything goes’ in discourse analysis. And second, part of the problem is that CDA analyses are limited frequently to single texts. This study addresses both shortcomings through its commitment to accountable research practice⁴¹ and its selection of a large, temporally dispersed data set. It is, theoretically, in a position to elucidate the dynamic relationship between social and discursive practices.

As for the demarcating line between the discursive and non-discursive – and the related matter of how one analyzes the extra-discursive – the study treats the distinction as analytical rather than empirical (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The question itself is an imperfect one as it suggests – wrongly – that because Fairclough distinguishes between discourse and non-discourse, he advocates a realist ontology. While it can be argued that Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) prefer the critical realist combination of relativist epistemology and realist ontology – the apparent evidence is their rejection of “judgemental relativism” (ibid., p. 136) – their actual position remains “a matter of interpretation” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 197). From a social constructionist standpoint, the circumscription of relativism is difficult to justify. When Chouliaraki and Fairclough dismiss the proposition that “all discourses are equally good or bad constructions of reality” (1999, p. 136), it is not because they ascribe to a bottom line reality against which such constructions can be measured, but because “the comparative strengths and limitations of different discourses are constantly being judged *in the course of practice*” (ibid., added emphasis). That is, reality must be represented discursively within spaces that possess “already a set of criteria for what is accepted as a true statement” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 197). Claims about reality do not suggest themselves but are “the very things to be argued for, questioned, defended, decided” (Edwards et al., 1995, pp. 35-36). It makes no sense within any of the discourse analytic traditions – be it Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, Wetherell and Potter’s discursive psychology or Fairclough’s CDA – to suggest that the extra-discursive is „more’ real than the discursive (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). While each of these approaches differs in its understanding of the relationship between discourse and non-discourse, none of them imply a hierarchical relationship between the two.

⁴¹ See the discussion of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) ‘transparency’ criterion, below (p. 58).

This study has taken special care in ensuring the epistemological and methodological compatibility of the various approaches that constitute its overarching research framework. Despite its multiperspectivism, it does not espouse anti-methodological eclecticism but attempts to bring together the strengths of several approaches in a theoretically principled manner in order to illuminate what has become a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon. The study seeks to imbibe the reflexive spirit integral to rhetoric of inquiry in which nothing – not even something as „obviously’ desirable as „relevance’ – is considered beyond interrogation. Yet its epistemological relativism remains in the service of an emancipatory agenda – and in this there is no contradiction either (see Edwards et al., 1995).

EVALUATING KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS

Since the data set deals with instances of „naturally occurring’ talk, the researcher’s influence on the material is somewhat diminished. Still, that is no guarantee for the validity of any subsequent finding. In attempting to bring about positive change in the world by stressing the notion of contingency (Willig, 1998), discourse analysts are committed to value systems that are as interrogable as the next person’s. The study’s emancipatory interest cannot be „positionless’ nor does it afford a privileged take on „the truth’. Within social constructionist epistemology, “[s]cientific [including social constructionist] knowledge is seen as *productive*. As with all other discourses, scientific knowledge produces knowledge, social relations and identities” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 116, original emphasis). But in relativist epistemology, the question arises of how a defense or critique of any given knowledge product is to proceed at all. With its insistence on a thoroughgoing reflexivity, the social constructionist research enterprise is not immune to the scrutiny of its own theories.

This matter has been dealt with to some extent in the previous chapter, although it warrants revisiting. There are two levels to the discussion that require clarification, which Jørgensen and Phillips have termed the “level of principle” (2002, p. 204) and the “grounded, concrete level” (ibid., p. 205). The former entails the open acknowledgement that there is no such thing as an epistemological high ground, which facilitates the democratization of knowledge practices. Nonetheless, “neither life nor research takes place on this level of principle in which everything is contingent” (ibid.). Positions must be taken on what is considered true and what is not as it is impossible to inhabit a space that is not governed by a discursive logic. Accordingly, the thesis does not advocate circumscribed relativism but views scientific knowledge as a “*truth that can be discussed*” (ibid., p. 206, original emphasis).

What makes this study *scientific* is its commitment to an explicit set of rules, adherence to which distinguishes better representations of reality from poorer ones. In their discussion of the validity of discourse analytic research, Potter and Wetherell (1987) introduce the criterion of *transparency*, which is an important arbiter of the discussable truth. In writing up a research report, transparency requires, first, the provision of representative examples from the data set along with detailed explanations that connect these extracts to the analytic claims made. Second, textual features that contradict the study's findings must be presented and accounted for. And third, transparency demands that the methodological rules of the study be stipulated clearly. This study has made a deliberate effort to implement these criteria by declaring its theoretical, methodological and moral commitments.

At this point, the topic of ethics arises. Authoritative books on discourse analysis habitually lack an entry for "ethics" in their indexes (e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, Yates, & Taylor, 2001). It has become a commonplace in much discourse analytic and archival research that, since it frequently does not require interaction with human participants, there are no ethical considerations to report. Then again, the absence of the human element can also mean that the investigator – having no longer to reflect on the unequal distribution of power between researcher and informant – has one less corrective constraining the analytic process. Besides, a „naturally occurring’ text in which the facts „speak for themselves’ is less likely to provoke the kind of circumspection that messy human contact does. Under such conditions, a reflexive stance that adheres stubbornly to the criterion of transparency becomes doubly important. Human participation is not a requirement for the perpetration of „epistemological violence’. Even the activities of discourse analysts and archival researchers – who are knowledge-makers first-and-foremost – are not without their social consequences.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Painter and van Ommen remark that “[t]oo often the year 1994, the advent of democracy [in South Africa], is treated as the end of history in Psychology” (2008, p. 440). This study is an attempt to buck the trend. Its data set has never been assembled before⁴² and amounts to no less than an institutional memory of psychology in South Africa. Some of the speeches were provided at considerable inconvenience to their owners, having to be dug out from boxes relegated to the forgotten corners of dusty garages, retrieved from hard drives no longer in

⁴² This is an improbable circumstance when one considers that full-text presidential addresses of APA conventions dating back to 1893 are available on the Internet.

use or posted from remote parts of the world. On other occasions the news was less positive: potential key informants had died, speeches had been misplaced or, regrettably, discarded. So although the study does its best to trace the trajectory of associational life in South African psychology, there are the inevitable gaps.

Unusually, one of these gaps extends over *recent* years. It is as if the discipline has grown increasingly less concerned about questions of history – seeing that it has „ended’ – in “a neo-liberal depoliticized present” (Painter & van Ommen, 2008, p. 440). Nowadays, ever more career politicians are delivering keynote and opening addresses at PsySSA congresses and “[t]he debate about relevance in South African Psychology during the 1980s... continues, but „relevance’ today is more closely linked to the discourse of marketing than that of politics” (ibid., p. 441). In late capitalist society, this widening influence of the market over public institutions has led to what Fairclough calls “the marketization of public discourse” (1993, p. 142). This development has had major ramifications for the people that work in these spaces – such as universities – and affects the nature of their “activities, social relations, and social and professional identities” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 6). With its focus on discursive-historical processes, this study can shed light on issues of stake that “are typically not transparent for the people involved” (ibid., p. 9).

Social constructionist research sets as its goal the unveiling of taken-for-granted knowledge (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Indeed, the idea that knowledge – psychological or otherwise – *should* be „relevant’ has been naturalized to the point that its contingent quality has been forgotten and replaced with a seeming objectivity representing “nothing but the sedimented form of power, in other words a power whose traces have been erased” (Laclau, 1990, p. 60). This study’s analysis of „relevance’ is about “showing the terrain of the... violence, of the power relation through which that instituting act took [and continues to take] place” (ibid., p. 34). It is akin in spirit to a Foucauldian genealogy – a „history of the present’ – that attempts to show how “the present is just as strange as the past” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 4).

Yet the study renounces the judgmental relativism that is often attributed to the Foucauldian project. In clarifying the intransigence of the „relevance’ question in South African psychology, the study hopes to address the lingering perception among the populace that psychologists “are too far removed from the community to be of assistance to black people” (Ruane, 2010, p. 220). While the thesis does not constitute, strictly speaking, an *explanatory critique* of „relevance’ (Bhaskar, 1986 quoted in Chouliaraki & Fairclough,

1999, p. 33), it remains „critical’ in seeking “to reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63). A fledgling attempt will be made to resolve the „relevance’ debate, centering on the cultivation of a “critical language awareness” in which the interlocutors of „relevance’ become more conscious of their discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 239-40).

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CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

... poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged, yet widely used... (Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

As an interlude to the discourse analytic chapters that follow, the purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the contents of the data set. Towards this end, it presents the results of a thematic analysis of the empirical material that yielded three overlapping themes. The first theme describes the relationship between psychology and South African society and the widespread belief that the discipline has failed its social mandate. The second theme identifies an individual–social antinomy that manifests through speakers’ contrasting prioritizations of individual wellbeing and social welfare. The final theme sheds light on the antagonistic relationship that obtains between the science and profession of psychology in South Africa. The chapter ends with the provocative suggestion that the debate about ‘relevance’ – at least during the apartheid years – may have represented an iteration of English-Afrikaner hostilities rather than a concern for the psychological health of all South Africans.

USING THEMATIC ANALYSIS

When working with large data sets, it is customary to employ the analytic preliminary of a coding process (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). *Thematic analysis* is one such possibility as it permits a thorough description of analytic material (Gomm, 2004). It differs from a straightforward content analysis because it is more attentive to the qualitative aspects of the data (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). Moreover, because it focuses on *what* is said, thematic analysis is an appropriate foil for discourse analysis, which is more interested in *how* things are said. Theoretically and epistemologically robust, the use of thematic analysis in this study is methodologically sound.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-stage model of analysis was applied to the data set: 1) speeches were read repeatedly; 2) extracts were coded; 3–5) broader themes were identified, reviewed and named; and 6) the thematic map was written up. Although an effort was made to theorize the *latent* significances of the identified themes, coding was performed for the most part at a *semantic* level. The analysis involved a combination of both *deductive* (‘top down’) and *inductive* (‘bottom up’) procedures in which themes were informed by the

research questions but were grounded also in the data. Indeed, the distinction between the two modes of reasoning is didactic more than anything (Gomm, 2004; O'Leary, 2004): “researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

An important criticism of thematic analysis concerns an apparent lack of accountability (Gomm, 2004). Owing to limitations of space, it is not possible to present in its entirety the evidence that substantiates the final thematic map. Instead, what are provided below are representative examples of the identified themes. In particular, the analysis yielded three interconnecting themes: the first pertains to the relationship between psychology and broader South African society, the second to the discipline’s individual–social antinomy, and the third to the distinction between psychology as science and profession. Each of these is explored in turn.

THEME 1: PSYCHOLOGY AND SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

In the West, psychology is highly regarded, the result of a disciplinary tendency towards the solution of practical, societal problems. In historical terms, this inclination was of such an order that it did not take long for practical psychology to supersede in scope the marginally older academic psychology (Jansz, 2004). The development of psychology in South Africa was no different when one thinks of the achievements of psychologists in the Poor White study, during mobilization efforts and in the disciplining of black labor (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). Accordingly, invocations of the psychology–society dialectic represent a dominant theme in the data set that for reasons of simplification is divided presently into two sub-themes. The first deals with normative conceptions of the psychology–society relationship while the second comprises evaluations of the actual form that relationship is perceived to have taken.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Addresses spanning the entire range of the data set were replete with references to the role of the discipline in society and the latter’s reciprocal demand for psychological services. Here is an excerpt from the opening address delivered at the 1953 SAPA congress:

Here in South Africa we are fond of stressing the immense complexity of the problems which face us as a multi-racial society. If we, as psychologists, are to play our proper constructive role in their solution, we cannot afford to spend much time on theoretical controversy, however much intellectual fun and stimulus we may undoubtedly derive from it. The problems which face us are indeed urgent, and it behoves us to be both liberal-minded and pragmatic in our approach to them. (Pratt-Yule, 1953, p. 9)

At the 1977 PIRSA congress, the president remarked:

We do not need only basic and even applied research, but also the development of research to the point where it attains practical value. And where necessary, the requisite help must also be extended for the implementation of the results. In short, we are not responsible only for the development of psychology as science, but also for psychology as profession, which must deliver a service to the community. (Langenhoven, 1977, p. 13)⁴³

After decades of political turmoil, the same problem-centered sentiments of responsibility and urgency were expressed in this keynote address at the 2002 PsySSA congress:

We simply must not take our young democracy for granted for there is much yet to be done to make it work for all our fellow citizens. In the challenges that face us as a country, and as higher education academics and administrators and as professional psychologists, we must be able to respond, heads held high... (Badat, 2002, p. 15)

THE FAILURE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Regardless of the milieu, the sense of mission in the foregoing extracts is palpable. Yet that mission was – and is – frequently said to have failed. Criticisms of the discipline – its research tradition especially – predominate in addresses delivered during the fifties, sixties and seventies while denunciations of the profession are prominent from the 1980s onwards.⁴⁴

In 1969, for instance, the PIRSA president had this to say:

An analysis of current research projects in South African psychology leaves a person without any doubts. Too much of these bear no relationship to our national needs and the findings are frequently of such a nature that they hold no meaning for anyone other than the researcher. Research is frequently of a fragmentary nature, seldom forming aspects of a central topic. Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country's many human problems are taken into account. (Robbertse, 1969, p. 8)⁴⁵

On another occasion – this time at the opening ceremony of the 1983 PASA congress – it was observed that

[t]he relation between South African psychology and our society is complex... [U]nless we become aware of the ideology affecting our discipline and its applications we will be unable to be useful in the new society which is undoubtedly to come; our knowledge and not only our skills may be found to be inappropriate for solving the problems which will present themselves and which we may not even perceive. (Albino, 1983, pp. 1-2)

A generation later, a stinging attack was visited on the profession at the opening of the 2007 PsySSA congress:

This country has a bag full of apartheid wounds as revealed during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. No active follow-up was ever done to bring about true reconciliation and healing so that there would be closure to some of the gruesome revelations

⁴³ This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁴⁴ Psychology as a profession was only recognized statutorily in 1974 with the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology.

⁴⁵ This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.

that our nation was exposed to. And so if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis. (B. Mkhize, 2007, pp. 5-6)

Regardless of the psychological association in question, psychology as science and profession is considered to have failed its social mandate. One explanation is that the discipline's 'social irrelevance' is a necessary consequence of its overriding concern for the wellbeing of the individual. Moreover, psychological theory has tended to conceptualize the relationship between the individual and the social in oppositional terms, making it difficult to imagine sociality as representing anything more than an aggregate of individual factors. It is this individual–social dualism that epitomizes the data set's second major theme.

THEME 2: THE INDIVIDUAL–SOCIAL ANTINOMY

Despite South African psychology's apparent lack of 'relevance', it has never been indifferent to context. Granted, it may not have responded to that context in the manner its critics hoped it would – but it did respond. In particular, the second theme reveals how speakers' opposing preoccupations with 'the individual' and 'the social' were referenced by local and international political developments. During the sixties and early seventies, 'the individual' was understood to be under siege whereas, from the late seventies onwards, 'the social' became cause for concern. Apartheid rule was coming undone at the seams while resistance at home and abroad gathered pace. As it happened, it was mainly Afrikaner conservatives that sought to defend 'the individual' by focusing their research on what they thought were appropriate topics. On the other hand, speakers concerned with the state of the broader South African society turned to systems theory for answers. This theme, then, describes the resulting individual–social antinomy by means of two contrasting sub-themes, comprising, respectively, a protest against the eclipse of individualism and a preference for systems thinking.

IN DEFENSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

In 1962, SAPA split acrimoniously on the question of 'race' membership. Apartheid law demanded – so the argument went – different psychological associations for different 'races', which led to the founding of the whites-only PIRSA. For PIRSA conservatives, SAPA's proposed 'leveling' of the racial hierarchy reflected the machinations of "a worldwide, hysterical mass movement" (la Grange, 1962, p. 7), whereas SAPA progressives viewed the perpetuation of that hierarchy as an affirmation of the "tyranny of the group" (Schlebusch, 1963, p. 8). At both ends of the political spectrum, a monolithic group mentality was

constructed as problematic. For PIRSA, that group was the international community, while, for SAPA, it was none other than PIRSA itself and, by extension, the Afrikaner government.

From this point on, PIRSA presidents started to lament the loss of individuality that they attributed to the “robotism” (Robbertse, 1968, p. 2) of a worldwide social order committed variously to capitalism, communism and scientism. In his 1963 address on gifted children, A.J. la Grange disapproved of the communist position where “all forms of separation of pupils according to giftedness, even within a class or school, are condemned as unethical or undemocratic” (1964, p. 3).⁴⁶ He took issue also with capitalists for whom the question of giftedness was purely utilitarian, being “mainly a matter of the extraction and exploitation of the available human material in such a manner that it can serve to the greatest advantage of the nation or the state as well as in the economic and the political terrain[s]” (p. 5). He then censured the middle position – “liberalistic socialism” – whose “highest ideal is the realization of a classless... community in which all people can live together happily on the basis of perfect equality, despite differences in descent, heredity, giftedness, etc.” (p. 7). By 1968, another PIRSA president was describing the situation with Orwellian horror:

It is indeed as if we can speak of a process of disintegration that is occurring in the Western world and that is largely attributable to the progress made in the field of technology and its ultimate expression in the splitting of the atom. The process of natural-scientification did not, as expected, make man freer, but on the contrary bound him tighter in slave chains so that he was eventually delivered up to his own handiwork. It's no wonder that Schubart claims that the West has given to mankind the most well-considered forms of technology, state and commerce, but that it has robbed him of his soul.... Man as a utilitarian being in the great machine of Robotism becomes an efficiency being that can be replaced by a new part if he is worn out. (Robbertse, 1968, p. 2)⁴⁷

The association's response to the perceived assault on ‘the individual’ was to encourage research on individual differences in areas such as giftedness (la Grange, 1964), creativity (Krige, 1973; Robbertse, 1964), the religious personality (Robbertse, 1968; van der Merwe, 1974) and, notoriously, racial difference (Robbertse, 1967). Yet it was not an unspecified individual but the *Afrikaner* individual that was at stake. For la Grange, the neglect of giftedness endangered “on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence” (1962, p. 17). In the same way, Robbertse advocated research on racial difference “because it involves the scientific basis of separate development and it touches on the root of our survival” (1967, p. 11).

⁴⁶ All excerpts from this address were translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁴⁷ This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.

THE RISE OF SYSTEMS THINKING

From the mid-seventies onwards, the winds of change swept through South Africa's political establishment. The 1974 promulgation of the ill-fated Afrikaans Medium Decree precipitated the 1976 Soweto riots, completely unanticipated events that turned the course of South African history on its head. Fueled by mounting condemnation of the wide-ranging depredations of apartheid policy, the political momentum shifted irrevocably. The country suffered a succession of international, regional and local setbacks that filtered through to Afrikaner institutions. In a sign that it was starting to lose its ideological moorings, PIRSA entered negotiations with SAPA and abandoned its founding philosophy of racial exclusivity. Meanwhile, the state – faced with the accumulating victories of mass political movements such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) – resorted to violent repression. In July 1985, a partial state of emergency was declared that was extended to the whole country in June 1986.

These were the bloodiest years of apartheid rule. Inside psychology, the leadership was split three ways between the conservative-leaning PASA, the progressive OASSSA and the radical Psychology and Apartheid Committee. Capitalism was still the enemy. The evolving Afrikaner constituency, however, meant that anti-capitalist sentiments were being expressed by anti-apartheid campaigners. In OASSSA circles, apartheid was explicitly linked to capitalism and its deleterious social consequences while privatization of mental health care was vigorously opposed (Coovadia, 1987; Vogelmann, 1986). The victim was no longer 'the individual' but 'the people'. The shift in focus from 'the individual' to 'the social' echoed the changing political situation in the country. Explaining the necessity of involving professional associations in mass mobilization, the opening speaker warned the 1987 OASSSA conference:

Twentieth century capitalism is a totally different creature: sophisticated, sure of itself and enormously powerful. Its influence has been shown to extend far beyond the factory, the mine and the mechanised farm. Indeed, its ideology is widely pervasive. Education, health, welfare, housing, transport, communication, political representation, and in fact, virtually every sector of society, is influenced to a greater or lesser extent, if not indirectly controlled, by capitalism. The baneful influence of this new form of capitalism therefore, creates contradictions for a wide array of people, thus directly creating the conditions for the mobilisation toward opposition by all classes. (Coovadia, 1987, pp. 16-17)⁴⁸

⁴⁸ In the post-apartheid years, anti-capitalist fervor fell by the wayside, the result of the South African academy's cooption into the global knowledge-making apparatus. (This claim will be substantiated in Chapter 10, which contains the analysis of addresses delivered during the post-apartheid era.) Yet, this did not prevent the occasional anti-capitalist reproach – as when the keynote speaker at the 2002 PsySSA congress observed that the future of higher education in the country depended on "... [t]he extent to which various fields, disciplines and programmes, and the humanities and social sciences overall, are not sacrificed at the altar of 'market relevance' and 'market needs'... [and w]hether there will be adequate government funding to sustain a future landscape with high quality public higher education institutions

The rising significance of „the social’ coincided with increasing references to systems theory as in this excerpt from the 1979 SAPA presidential address:

Psychology is the study of human development and behaviour in a variety of contexts and in interaction with many systems of which the individual is a part. The major systems are: the family, the educational and knowledge systems, the social and ideological systems, the economic and occupational systems, the environmental, health and recreational systems... The psychologist has a place in all these areas of human development. (Gerdes, 1979, p. 3)

On the occasion of the reunification of SAPA and PIRSA in 1982, the first PASA president remarked that

Interpersonal relationships has aptly been chosen as the central theme for this congress: not only does it refer to the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society at this point in time, but from the vantage point of an informed scientific community it reflects a singular sensitivity for the epistemological shift which we are currently experiencing in our discipline... and I am obviously referring to the advent and development of general systems theory. (Rademeyer, 1982, p. 2, original emphases)

Mental health was no longer theorized with reference to individual-specific factors, but in relation to broader social phenomena, as in this excerpt from the opening address at OASSSA’s first national conference:

To summarise: That mental health must be located within a political context. Politics is primarily responsible for the nature of our society, and it is societal conditions that largely determine the mental health of South Africans. (Vogelman, 1986, p. 11)

By the time of his opening address at the 1989 PASA congress, Deo Strümpfer remarked how,

[p]articularly over the last decade or so, there has been an increasing awareness of suprasystems, collateral systems and subsystems – depending on where you start. All of these systems are in constant interaction. Systems thinking tells us that to exist means to be related. (1989, p. 1)

Consistent with this increasingly prominent discourse about the social determinants of psychological health, approaches to intervention started changing too. Catch-phrases like interdisciplinarity (Gerdes, 1979, pp. 11-12), community psychology (Biesheuvel, 1987, p. 2), Afrocentric psychology (Mkhatshwa, 2000, p. 3), primary health care (Coovadia, 1987, p. 28), prevention and promotion (Asmal, 2001, p. 4) and social change (Gerdes, 1992, p. 41) – each of which is indebted to systems thinking in one way or another – became and to some extent remain emblematic watchwords in the discipline.

and to also ensure that there is not a wholesale marketisation and commodification of higher education” (Badat, 2002, p. 6).

THEME 3: SCIENCE VERSUS PROFESSION

In his presidential address at the 1954 SAPA congress, Simon Biesheuvel reflected on a seemingly insoluble tension between pure and applied psychology:

Our analysis appears to be leading us to the absurd conclusion that in order to carry out his job properly the occupational [industrial] psychologist must become a kind of scientific "superman" required to conquer a universe of sciences within the time of an ordinary professional training course. In this predicament, he could either choose to become a scientific dilettante, knowing the headlines but none of the contents, or accept the advice given by Hamlet to his mother concerning her heart, to "throw away the worser part of it, and live the purer with the other half", the worse in this case presumably being the mechanistic, the purer the humanistic aspects of psychological application, or vice versa, according to one's background and inclinations. (Biesheuvel, 1954, p. 134)

Thirty years later, discussions about this split within the discipline had lost none of their awkwardness. In the opening address of the 1983 PASA congress, it was commented that

[i]t is only in psychology that we tend to have sharp separation between the basic researcher and the applied researcher. And I believe the basic researchers are to be blamed for this for they have, in general, been working in a natural scientific paradigm that is quite inappropriate for dealing with the problems found by the applied psychologists concerned with persons in social situations. Often they have been dismissive of what they see as the unscientific fumbblings of the applied prac[titioners]. (Albino, 1983, p. 8)

Another decade on – in the opening address at PASA's 1993 congress – it was claimed that the distinction between basic and applied psychology was best explained by reflecting on the differing traditions of psychology departments in English- and Afrikaans-language universities:

For a long time psychology at the Afrikaans universities was characterized by a strong service orientation. Heavy emphasis was put on applied subdisciplines, particularly clinical, counselling, industrial/organizational and educational psychology – all of those that became registration categories when South African psychology became professionalized.... At the traditionally English universities there always was a heavy emphasis on basic, theoretical psychology and research publication has always been the norm for recognition. There was a certain ambivalence towards application, with clinical psychology for some time the only significant exception. (Strümpfer, 1993, pp. 7-8)

The data set is replete with such juxtapositions as the "theory" and "practice" of the discipline (Pratt-Yule, 1953, p. 8), the "scientific" and "applied" aspects of the subject (van der Merwe, 1961, p. 229), "researchers" and "professional practitioners" (Badat, 2002, p. 2), and "knowledge" and "skills" (H. Mkhize, 2010, p. 1). While, on some occasions, these references were made in passing, on others they drew attention to a "division" (Pratt-Yule, 1953, p. 4) – a "dilemma" (Biesheuvel, 1954, p. 134) – that led to recriminations on both sides. First the basic science was castigated for failing to address issues of „relevance’ (e.g. du Toit, 1975; Robbertse, 1969), while, later, the same charge would be levied against the profession (e.g. Asmal, 2001; B. Mkhize, 2007; Vogelmann, 1986). But it is Strümpfer's

(1993) assertion that this fault-line in South African psychology had less to do with the shortcomings of science's two-step model than with English-Afrikaner differences that warrants special attention.

Prior to World War II, South African psychology had a Euro-British orientation. After the war, it acquired an American character – a consequence of Afrikaner apartheid rule and the South African academy's resulting isolation from continental Europe and Britain (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Strümpfer, 1993).⁴⁹ This explains the frequent mention in PIRSA addresses of trends in American research (e.g. la Grange, 1966; Robbertse, 1967; van der Merwe, 1974) – with Robbertse at one point appearing to forestall possible objections by justifying his support for the “new American illness” (1964, p. 8).⁵⁰ Despite different underlying philosophies, American pragmatism dovetailed seamlessly with the Afrikaner „service orientation’, which revealed itself in PIRSA addresses in the form of repeated discussions about the professionalization of South African psychology.⁵¹ The Afrikaner-dominated Stellenbosch University took up the gauntlet in this drive for professionalization (Strümpfer, 1993) – ostensibly to protect the public and gain its respect (la Grange, 1950; Langenhoven, 1978) – while the political impulse for statutory registration derived variously from the (failed) 1962 and (successful) 1966 attempts by psychiatric patients on the life of the Prime Minister as well as ministerial investigations into Scientology and the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (Strümpfer, 1993).⁵² Steady lobbying culminated in 1974 in the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology.

By contrast, psychology departments at English-language universities were noted for their “heavy emphasis on basic, theoretical psychology and research publication” (Strümpfer, 1993, p. 8). It was not that English-speaking liberals were indifferent to the social problems

⁴⁹ Language barriers played their part here too (Strümpfer, 1993).

⁵⁰ This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans. Robbertse was stating his case for American-style research on creative abilities.

⁵¹ Prior to the 1982 SAPA-PIRSA merger, these discussions were conducted almost exclusively by PIRSA presidents (du Toit, 1975; Hattingh, 1966; la Grange, 1950; la Grange, 1962; Langenhoven, 1977; Langenhoven, 1978; Rademeyer, 1982; Raubenheimer, 1981). The significance of this finding, however, is compromised by the fact that no SAPA addresses could be sourced for the period 1963 to 1978. Nonetheless, it has been well documented that Afrikaner psychologists dominated the vanguard of professionalization efforts (e.g. Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Strümpfer, 1993).

⁵² The Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC) was established in 1949 by Christian ministers and teachers to promote ecumenicalism and multiracialism. It provided several anti-apartheid organizations with T-group training through what were known as Personal Relations and Organisational Development (PROD) programs. The WFC counted Steve Biko among its attendees and can be said to have played a role in the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement. In the early seventies, the WFC came under attack from several Afrikaner newspapers that alleged that the Centre was using psychological methods to foment a liberal-socialist takeover. Following a ministerial commission of inquiry, the then Prime Minister branded the WFC a “den of iniquity” (Vanek, 2005, p. 157).

of the day but that they placed their faith in science itself – that is, in “the hope that reasoned enquiry and patient persuasion would triumph over „ideology’... [in] an increasingly race-obsessed state” (Dubow, 2001, p. 116). Indeed, when a revolt against the Afrikaner-led profession began in the late seventies, it was these universities that affirmed their solidarity with the “community of the oppressed” (Strümpfer, 1993, p. 9).⁵³ As early as the 1930s, psychology in South Africa had been split between conservatives partial to Afrikaner nationalism and liberals who either opposed racism or attempted to analyze it scientifically (Foster, 1993).

DISCUSSION

The foregoing themes intersect appreciably with one another. South African psychology’s perceived failure to honor its social responsibilities (Theme 1) derives from the discipline’s traditionally individualizing orientation. The antinomy thus generated between the individual and social worlds (Theme 2) triggers grievances against a science and profession whose methodological individualism cannot accommodate sociality on its own terms. In turn, the apparent „irrelevance’ of psychological research and practice in relation to national imperatives (Theme 3) reinforces perceptions that psychology is not fulfilling its social obligations (Theme 1).

It is worth noting that early criticisms of the discipline were aimed at academic psychology. At the time, it was mostly PIRSA psychologists that set about slating the methods and topics of psychological research (e.g. du Toit, 1975; Langenhoven, 1977;

⁵³ Some of the important papers that came out of English-language psychology departments include Holdstock (1979; 1981a; 1981b), Dawes (1985; 1986) and Berger and Lazarus (1987). Holdstock’s series of papers were influential in the early days of the ‘relevance’ debate and have become popular again in recent years. He called attention to the “neglected potential” (1979, p. 118) of indigenous healing, citing the fact that “there is only one registered black clinical psychologist in the Republic of South Africa” (p. 119). Two years later his tone was less diplomatic: “Psychology departments at Afrikaans universities, in the first instance, are generally more applied than their English counterparts. Secondly, they attach greater importance in their clinical endeavours to the therapeutic techniques of Rogers than is the case at English speaking departments. The paradox to be resolved is how, in the light of adherence to certain Rogerian principles, Afrikaans departments have managed to remain as aloof as they have been from the racial issues facing the country” (Holdstock, 1981a, p. 125). As far as Holdstock was concerned, psychologists in South Africa needed “a crash course in the teaching of empathy” (ibid., p. 127). He argued elsewhere that “Psychology in South Africa is like the proverbial ostrich” (1981b, p. 7), requiring not only an “attitude transplant” (p. 8) but a dose of “unconditional positive regard” (p. 9) in order to realize that “[b]lack persons are people too” (p. 8). It should not be assumed, however, that English-speaking psychologists agreed on what a ‘relevant’ psychology should look like. Dawes, for example, took issue with what he called Holdstock’s “innocent Rogerianism” (1985, p. 57) and the latter’s elevation of cultural over class considerations.

Robbertse, 1967; Roux, 1971)⁵⁴ – an area dominated by English-speaking psychologists. Then, just as the apartheid state was starting to unravel, the „relevance’ of the *profession* was called into question. With accusations revolving around professional complicity with the apartheid regime, the roles were reversed as English-speaking psychologists now began fingering their Afrikaner colleagues. Consequently, if one were to think of the „relevance’ debate during the apartheid years as composed of two halves – an early debate about the value of the basic science (prior to the 1980s) and a later one about the merits of the applied science (starting in the late 1970s) – it is tempting to conclude that it was no more than another incarnation of Anglo-Boer antagonisms, „the continuation of politics by other means’.

This raises the possibility that the anti-apartheid quest for „social relevance’ may not have been about the much-spoken-of „majority of South Africans’ – indeed, Spivak’s (1988) thesis on the impossibility of the subaltern voice would suggest as much. It is true that black academics contributed significantly to discussions about „social relevance’ (e.g. Nicholas & Cooper, 1990; Seedat, Cloete, & Shochet, 1988), but by that stage – the latter half of the 1980s and the early 1990s – the debate’s parameters had already been set. Whether the conversation would have followed a different trajectory had black psychologists been involved in it from the start, is a matter of speculation. What is clear is that post-apartheid iterations of „relevance’ have been dominated by black psychologists (e.g. Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; de la Rey & Ipser, 2004; N. Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey, & Seedat, 2001; Naidoo & Kagee, 2009; Pillay & Kramers, 2003) – at the same time that it has become “more closely linked to the discourse of marketing than that of politics” (Painter & van Ommen, 2008, p. 441).

⁵⁴ The weight of this finding is diminished by the fact that no SAPA addresses could be located for most of the sixties and seventies. Then again, SAPA addresses of the 1950s were not critical of the psychological research of those years.

CHAPTER 6: THE SAPA–PIRSA SPLIT

It is my heartfelt wish that PIRSA, out of the strength of its will to live and serve, will grow into an institution that will earn the recognition and love not only of its own people but also of its other-raced fellow citizens... (Adriaan la Grange – PIRSA president, 1962)

[T]he great inventor and creator should not be motivated by the needs of his fellow people but by his search for the truth, by vision, strength and courage that springs from his own spirit. (Bob Schlebusch – SAPA president, 1962)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents an analysis of two presidential addresses delivered in 1962, the year that Afrikaner psychologists split from SAPA to form a rival association, namely, PIRSA. Emphasis is placed on the social and rhetorical contexts within which the two addresses should be situated, as well as on the rhetorical devices that are deployed in mobilizing what appear to be diametrically opposing positions regarding the desirability of „relevance’ in psychology. Whereas the PIRSA president hints at the association’s impending promotion of a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service), the SAPA president endorses a discourse of *liberal individualism* that valorizes the independence of science.

PIRSA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1962 (A.J. LA GRANGE)

The year 1962 marks a watershed in the associational life of South African psychology. SAPA’s much-feared split had come to pass. On June 23rd, approximately two hundred people met at the University of South Africa to establish PIRSA (J. Louw, 1987). The matter of admitting blacks to SAPA ranks had been shelved for six years, first with the application of an Indian psychologist, Josephine Naidoo, in 1956, and again in 1960 with another Indian psychologist, Chanderpaul Ramphal. Naidoo had been told by Simon Biesheuvel – then SAPA president – to withdraw her application as he “thought it better to let sleeping dogs lie” (ibid., p. 342). The decision on Ramphal – who had postponed his application for three years because “he did not want to upset us”⁵⁵ – was deferred. In the words of Council chairman A.B. van der Merwe, Ramphal’s application would be revisited when “the Council has formulated the principle of admission, as requested yesterday at the AGM, and until it has been agreed to by the [next] Annual General Meeting.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The words of Ronald Albino. Addendum to the minutes of the SAPA Council Meeting, Durban, July 15, 1960, p. 6, Raubenheimer archive, Stellenbosch University.

⁵⁶ ibid., p. 7.

By the time of the 1961 Stellenbosch congress, SAPA branches throughout the country had deliberated over and formulated responses to a number of issues pertaining to black membership. In turn, Council had agreed unanimously that the AGM would be asked to ratify two of its proposals: “that whites and non-whites be admitted to the association subject to membership qualifications as stipulated in the constitution” and that, “given that we have non-white and white members in the association, annual general meetings and branch meetings will be organized as in the past and that arrangements will be made, subject to local conditions, to accommodate all members.”⁵⁷ Council appeared committed to the ideal of a racially integrated society, albeit “subject to local conditions.” By contrast, SAPA’s Pretoria branch – while not taking as extreme a position as the association’s Potchefstroom and Bloemfontein branches – wanted the constitution amended in order to facilitate its recommendation

*that the members of the Psychological Association consist of whites and non-whites [but] that the Council will consist only of whites; that the non-whites will choose three whites to represent their interests, namely one for Bantus, one for Asians and one for Coloreds; that the Council’s powers and functions will remain as in the past; that no mixed gatherings will take place, namely of whites and non-white members; and that whites and non-whites will establish their separate branches and will conduct their congresses and annual general meetings separately.*⁵⁸

The Pretoria resolution was defeated by 44 votes to 5, while the Council’s resolutions were passed by 31 votes to 23 (J. Louw, 1987). In an interview twenty years later, Biesheuvel recalled

*... Prof la Grange saying we have debated this thing, [it is a] fair decision by the majority so we must now just accept this and live together. That same evening, I was told, there was a meeting in someone’s house in Stellenbosch where they decided to break away and then PIRSA was born.*⁵⁹

For his part, Dreyer Kruger – who in 1960 had opposed Ramphal’s application on the grounds that he had failed to follow the correct application procedures – recollected decades later that

... it came to a head at the Stellenbosch congress. At that congress, the so-called Afrikaner nationalist-leaning psychologists convened on one side – we caucused together and decided that we must vote that there must be separate associations for the different population groups – or rather for the whites one side and the non-whites must then not become members. A person that took an incredibly strong position was Dr Paul Robbertse who was head of the Human Sciences Research Council at the time.... For him it wasn’t just a matter of professional interest but he put it very clearly that for him it was about the maintenance of

⁵⁷ Minutes of the South African Psychological Association Council Meeting, May 27, 1961, p. 7, Raubenheimer archive, Stellenbosch University. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 6. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁵⁹ Simon Biesheuvel interview, May 14, 1982, pp. 19-20.

apartheid in all spheres and on all levels. So we decided beforehand that we shall vote for separate associations but that we would then make an appeal to the whole congress that we would not break away under any circumstances. How deeply that promise of not breaking away was meant, became clear immediately after the vote was taken where we then lost and then I remember very well [what] Prof la Grange said. When he said we must stick to the point that we must not split he actually thought that we were going to be on the winning side, but we ended up being on the losing side. At the last moment the opposition organized things – [they] brought [a] whole lot of people from [the University of] Cape Town to Stellenbosch to outvote us. That caucus then decided to appoint an action committee to take the matter further. The action committee was under the chairmanship of Robbertse.... The members eventually decided that we must establish a separate association and it was then decided that we shall hold a congress of all likeminded people and that we must not resign from SAPA but only make known our resignation as it were by joining a new association. And this then also happened early in 1961. That is how PIRSA came into being. The motivation for it was completely and exclusively political and the whole aim of it was to maintain apartheid in the profession. I believe that Dr Robbertse towed us along – some of us that sat there were too scared to oppose the man because we knew all too well that our posts will be in danger and we therefore just played safe. Many people belonged to PIRSA because they knew [this] and Prof Roux who was head of a big [psychology] department [at the University of South Africa] and Dr Robbertse and Mr Bekker [Department of Labor] said that a person that stays with SAPA will not get an appointment in his bureau or department and will also not get any promotion under any circumstances. They made it very clear that if a person did not join, they would do their best to force you out. So let it be said once: the whole thing was politically motivated, [there was] incredibly strong Broederbond⁶⁰ motivation behind the whole thing. This is now the truth as I see it. And I was there.⁶¹

Kruger's version reveals the divisions in the Afrikaner camp. There were the non-separatists led by Adriaan la Grange, for whom a possible secession was no more than a gambit, and genuine separatists directed by Paul Robbertse, who fully intended breaking away. When asked in what manner he viewed PIRSA's historical significance, Robbertse replied:

There was an incredible reawakening of the Afrikaner as a result of PIRSA. The old SAPA and the Afrikaans speaker: he wasn't at home there and it was actually people – Biesheuvel, people from Wits and Natal, English-language universities – they were the people that wielded the scepter. We just felt we were strangers and in an organization that actually spoke for South Africa. We didn't count – we were nowhere – this was our experience and a person must see it against the specific background.... Things that we accept today, with which we are in agreement, could simply not be [accepted] in those days. Here and there a voice would [protest] – it was immediately smothered and then you were also branded [as] leftist and a liberal and no thinking Afrikaner would at that time be keen to be seen in conversation with those people and be associated with them.... If a person thinks back and asks – look, from our perspective at the time – incredible hotheads... it took work to get Prof la Grange to join our ranks. He was from Stellenbosch and came up with a delegation – we put him up in the old Residency Hotel [in Pretoria]. La Grange was a very levelheaded, well-balanced person with a very unique outlook on life and – but his sympathies – [it] does not matter where his sympathies were – but it was a question of is it the right thing.... Prof JM du Toit from the south and AB van der Merwe eventually also joined our ranks and those people made a big contribution to the establishment and advancement of psychology under the banner of PIRSA – great men those – left deep imprints in psychology – but la Grange was for one or other reason – we felt we must also have a commander. This [is what] we saw in Prof la Grange. In

⁶⁰ The Broederbond was established in 1918 as a secret males-only organization concerned with the promotion of Afrikaner interests.

⁶¹ Dreyer Kruger interview, April 15, 1982, pp. 1-3. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

*his gentle, shrinking manner he eventually joined us – I think he was also our first president – I think of him [having] great authority.*⁶²

For Robbertse – who had resigned his SAPA membership already in 1959 – the reason behind PIRSA's breakaway was clear:

*That time with the old SAPA – it reached a point that you can only describe as – the affair had now stagnated – stagnation over what then sounded strange [is] today not so strange, [but it] was the strange ideology – the whole color question again entered the thing – actually took over as it were – [I] do not really want to mention names.*⁶³

A.S. Roux was of the same view:

*You know why we founded PIRSA: the SAPA meetings wasted an incredible amount of time through emotional outbursts, through lecturers at English-language universities that dragged politics into psychology and we later saw we were making no progress.*⁶⁴

Whereas Kruger described PIRSA's formation as shot through with politics, Robbertse and Roux insisted that whatever politicking there was, came from SAPA's side.⁶⁵ Robbertse, in particular, drew on the haunting Afrikaner peroration on British persecution: SAPA's English members had thwarted Afrikaner interests once again, relegating the long-suffering Boers to the ranks of obscurity. As for la Grange, he found himself in what must have been an awkward situation. Appointed as SAPA's first president in 1948, he was the patriarch of South African psychology but was also identified as possessing the necessary gravitas for advancing PIRSA's nascent mission. Notwithstanding his belief that "I am personally [one] hundred percent in favor of [non-whites] being admitted",⁶⁶ he also

⁶² P.M. Robbertse interview, May 12, 1982, pp. 14-16. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ A.S. Roux interview, May 11, 1982, p. 2. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁶⁵ To the neutral observer, it may seem ironic that PIRSA blamed SAPA for digging up political hot potatoes. Robbertse and Roux, however, were thinking in terms of the time-honored distinction between *volkspolitiek* (people politics) and *partypolitiek* (party politics). During the Boer rebellion of 1915, the (Afrikaner) *volk* was divided over former Boer general and then Prime Minister Louis Botha's decision to call out an Afrikaner citizen force to crush the insurrection (Moodie, 1975). Accounting for ninety percent of Afrikaner parishioners, the Dutch Reformed Church was walking a tightrope with some ministers supporting Botha and others opposing him. To hold the flock together, the Church responded by creating a pragmatic division between *volkspolitiek* and *partypolitiek*: the idea was that the Church would involve itself in community issues – such as Afrikaans-medium education and Afrikaner poverty – but would not presume to advise its congregation on how to vote. Whether churchmen or party politicians, for Broederbond members in particular, this separation of church and state was to prove crucial: "the political unity of Afrikanerdom required conscious differentiation between the spheres of political activity, church affairs, and the nascent civil religion" (*ibid.*, p. 98). Hence, for PIRSA and its Broederbonders, the mistake that SAPA made was to involve itself in a 'race' question that belonged to the realm of *partypolitiek*. Apartheid was state policy – there was no question of psychologists interfering with it.

⁶⁶ Addendum to the minutes of the SAPA Council Meeting, Durban, July 15, 1960, p. 4, Raubenheimer archive, Stellenbosch University. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

expressed the view that “the intention from the start was that [SAPA] is an association for whites”:⁶⁷

*The point is just: shouldn't we take our time. There are other people that think otherwise. In light of such a division, then, we must not be hasty. If we are hasty, we run a risk of causing a rift. We agree about the merits of the matter, but for me there remains the problem of the interpretation of the Constitution [despite it making no explicit mention of any membership restrictions].*⁶⁸

Given la Grange's cautious demeanor, the contents of his presidential address at the inaugural PIRSA congress are remarkable, lending weight to rhetoric's central insight that it is the audience that matters. Despite his personal ambivalence regarding the racial politics of the day, he ended up delivering a virtuoso performance that – in the tranquil hindsight of posterity – embodied the quintessence of unbridled racism. But it is also likely that la Grange and his coterie of southerners⁶⁹ had been won over after the visit to their northern colleagues – a meeting of considerable import when one reflects on the politics of the day.

Deep-set fault lines continued to hamstring the ruling National Party (NP) whose hardliners from the Transvaal and Orange Free State clung to their “northern demonology of the machinations of *die suidelike belange* (southern interests)” (D. O'Meara, 1996, p. 90).⁷⁰ The Cape NP was accused frequently of being too liberal. It had wanted a republic within the British Commonwealth and, in the early sixties, appeared to support the re-enfranchisement of so-called „coloreds’. Prime Minister Verwoerd was not about to take this intransigence lying down. In August 1961, he appointed to his cabinet the feared Cape NP secretary, P.W. Botha, entrusting him with the Colored Affairs portfolio. Next, in the landmark general elections in October that year, the NP won almost two-thirds of seats in Parliament, playing on white fears of African nationalism in South Africa and across the continent. Verwoerd dominated the NP scene in a manner hitherto unprecedented, having survived not only the point-blank entry of two of David Pratt's bullets into his head on April 9, 1960 but also the country's withdrawal from the Commonwealth on May 31, 1961. La Grange's change of heart between Stellenbosch 1961 and Pretoria 1962 reveals the stellar rise of Die

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Born, raised and educated in the Cape, la Grange served as professor of psychology at the University of Pretoria from 1945 to 1953 (van der Merwe, 1977). He returned to his *alma mater* – Stellenbosch University – in 1955 to take up the Chair in Educational Psychology. He then left Stellenbosch in 1962 to head the research planning division of the South African Road Safety Council (SARSC). He returned to the University of Pretoria's psychology department in 1968 (Matieland, 1969).

⁷⁰ Indeed, the last two battles for the country's premiership had pitted North against South – the first in 1954 between the ‘Lion of the North’ J.G. Strijdom and the Cape-backed candidate Nicolaas Havenga and the second in 1958 between H.F. Verwoerd and Eben Dönges.

Hollander's⁷¹ political stock. In psychology, as in politics, the North was well and truly in control – and, after a personal meeting with Verwoerd on June 12, 1962, that fact could not have escaped the notice of A.J. la Grange.

ANALYSIS

Titled *The Background and Most Important Objective of the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa*, Adriaan Johannes la Grange (1962) locates his address within the *forensic* and *deliberative* oratorical genres. In the wake of the SAPA split, a presumably shaken audience would expect as much – that is, firm statements of past fact and a future course of action. La Grange's opening paragraph does not disappoint and is notable for its high-stakes character:

On the occasion of the first Congress and annual meeting of our Psychological Institute, it is not only appropriate but even necessary that plain and unambiguous answers be formulated in respect of a number of fundamental questions. It is necessary for the sake of developing a sober self-understanding of the nature and existence of our society, as well as in consideration of the desirability of providing a clear image to others, friend as well as enemy, of what we are, where we come from and where we are heading. (1962, p. 7)⁷²

Speakers are advised ordinarily to avoid antagonizing audiences and to align themselves with common values. The fact that la Grange does not stop to ingratiate himself with his listeners – he introduces his talk in a manner that would arouse hostility, wariness or confusion in the uninitiated – suggests a mindfulness of preaching to the converted. There is no need to establish common ground: one's mere presence in this whites-only, Afrikaner-dominated gathering guarantees rapport between speaker and audience. Indeed, the two are practically indistinguishable as evidenced by la Grange's repeated usage of the pronouns „we' and „our'. There are none of the *politeness strategies* that ordinarily accompany what under different circumstances would constitute a “face-threatening act” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60 quoted in Fairclough, 1992, p. 163). Moreover, la Grange's use of words like “sober”, “clear”, “unambiguous” and “plain” is evidence of what is known in rhetorical parlance as an *introduction corrective* (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 262) – deployed typically when speaking about misrepresented subjects and consistent with defensive positionings.⁷³

⁷¹ This moniker was a reference to Verwoerd being born in the Netherlands.

⁷² All excerpts from la Grange's address were translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁷³ Strümpfer describes the atmosphere at the inaugural congress: “I actually went with the rest of the department, all the psychologists in Potchefstroom went to that meeting and it was really a Blood River kind of climate. A [Reformed Church] minister who was also a psychologist opened the meeting with scripture readings and prayer and he read from somewhere in the New Testament where it says that those that are not for us are against us, that little bit. The way he prayed about all of this, we were at Blood River. It was a Total Onslaught kind of meeting that he opened” (Nell, 1993, p. 35). (In 1838, the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulu king, Dingaan, at Blood River. Thousands of Zulu soldiers were killed with

La Grange sets himself the task of addressing three overarching issues:

- I. *What are the deep-seated factors that led to the formation of a society like PIRSA?*
- II. *What are the psychological principles of our basic policy of separate societies for different racial groups?*
- III. *What are the most important immediate objectives to which PIRSA should apply itself?* (1962, p. 7)

In answering the first question, la Grange argues that there is a “natural need for self-protection against a worldwide, hysterical mass movement for equalization that is also busy steering some of our own people off course” (ibid.). He contends that this impulse for self-preservation represents “the sane opposition against the irrational manner in which some western nations disregard the basic facts and devastating consequences of racial integration” (ibid.). La Grange reasons that the establishment of PIRSA represents “the natural striving for self-realization that forms the stimulus for the healthy development of every self-respecting individual as well as for every self-respecting people or nation” (ibid.). He repeatedly *nominalizes* processes when he speaks of “self-protection”, “opposition”, “self-realization” and “development”, which is typical of scientific language (Fairclough, 1992, p. 179). By turning “concretes into abstracts” (ibid., p. 182), he does not have to explain how the “self-protection”, “self-realization” and “development” of whites living in apartheid South Africa are actually achieved, namely, by brutalizing blacks in every detail of their lives. Distinct from Strijdom’s doctrine of white *baasskap* (domination), la Grange adopts an attenuated Verwoerdian idiom of „separate freedoms’ that is mindful of anticolonial and independence movements sweeping through the developing world (see D. O’Meara, 1996).

With each justification for PIRSA’s existence, la Grange directs an appeal to the reasonableness of his audience (*logos*) by portraying racial equality as nonsensical. But he has also expressed the rationale for what Verwoerd had begun calling the policy of “separate freedoms” (D. O’Meara, 1996, p. 107). In May 1959, when the Minister of Native Affairs, Daan de Wet Nel, introduced the *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill* to Parliament, he articulated formally these touchstones of apartheid thinking: first, the existence of an inviolable, God-given calling for every *volk* (ethnic group); second, the *volk*’s right to self-preservation; and third, its self-actualization through segregation from other ethnic groups (Moodie, 1975; D. O’Meara, 1996). La Grange succeeds *intertextually* in binding PIRSA to the political agenda of the state.

no loss of life on the Voortrekker side. The victory was seen as proof of God’s Will that the Afrikaners exist as an independent people.)

On the other hand, he points out that

[t]he allegation that is frequently heard that the policy of racial separation is based on white fears that they will be devoured by the numerical superiority of non-whites... is evidently an utterly naïve and inaccurate manner of stating the matter.... If the whites were no good for anything other than being devoured by the encircling masses, why should they be afraid of their destruction? (1962, p. 8)

La Grange knows that white fear is a flimsy rationale for apartheid rule. He proceeds to *metaphorize* whiteness as threatened by a rapacious blackness, building into the metaphor a *hyperbolic* trope (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 403) that makes white fear seem preposterous.⁷⁴ Besides, the state-sponsored policy of separate development has nothing to do with emotions (i.e. irrationality) and everything to do with a discourse of reasonableness – “natural striving”, “self-protection”, “sane opposition” and the like. The foregoing passage merely underscores the self-evident truth of apartheid rationality by ending with an unanswerable question that negates attempts to locate the essence of whiteness at the lower-end of the food chain (see Billig, 1996). That is, la Grange’s refutation (*confutatio*) is submitted by means of a logical appeal (*logos*) in which the terms of reference for whiteness are disputed in a manner that supports his general argument. Where fear is admitted, “if there is such a thing... [it is] at the prospect of our striving being impeded and that, instead of mental health, prosperity and happiness, we [end up having to] pick the bitter fruits of mental disturbance, social decay and the sorrows of an unhappy and miserable existence” (1962, p. 8). And under such conditions, fear is a justifiable response.

To analyze la Grange’s strategy differently, he proves his point by making use of an abbreviated syllogism, or *enthymeme*.⁷⁵ In order to contest the charge that whites fear destruction, he resorts to a shortened argumentative form that, if spelt out in full, would read as follows:

All people that exist only to be devoured do not fear their destruction (Premise A).

Whites exist only to be devoured (Premise B).

Therefore, whites do not fear their destruction (Conclusion).

The argumentative form in itself is valid. What la Grange wants to reveal, though, is the specious reasoning of PIRSA’s opponents. He concedes the “utterly naïve” belief expressed

⁷⁴ Metaphors exert a powerful influence not only on the way people think, but also on how they act (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 194-195).

⁷⁵ What makes enthymemes different from syllogisms is that they trade in probabilities rather than certainties, exchanging strict logic for “the province of rhetoric” (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 63). Moreover, because enthymemes are difficult to spot, those probabilities are taken up frequently as certainties.

in Premise B – but only for the purpose of demonstrating the desired Conclusion. The implied premise (A) he excises for the audience’s convenience (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Yet it is this major premise – not mentioning the minor one – that is open to contestation. Are there people that exist only to be “devoured” and, if there are, do they never fear “destruction”?

On the subject of “racial mixing”, la Grange says it would enjoy the “wholehearted support of all reasonable people” if its goal were “the attainment of a clear and meritorious objective for the promotion of human joy and peace between the members of different races” (1962, p. 9). As for the empirical findings on interracial contact, however, “we find precisely the opposite” (p. 10). La Grange quotes extensively from William McDougall’s *Group Mind* and Kenneth Little’s *Race and Society*, citing evidence of the deleterious fallouts resulting from racial integration in Brazil, India and Hawaii. He concludes that human felicity depends on “obedience to the demands of the elementary natural law that brings together those who on the basis of common inborn characteristics belong together” (p. 12). An instance of manifest intertextuality, the resemblance of this passage to the former Prime Minister D.F. Malan’s celebrated aphorism – “Bring together what, through inner conviction, belongs together” – situates la Grange once again within the confines of Afrikaner nationalist discourse.

Drawing on John Carothers’ *The African Mind in Health and Society*, la Grange argues that racial integration policies obstruct the root-taking of normal identification processes fundamental to the “natural striving for self-realization.” He summarizes Carothers’ position on the African experience of integration as one in which “[t]he greater the contact with white civilization, the more frequent the occurrence of mental illnesses” (pp. 12-13). La Grange reasons that “a state of tension and psychical conflict is initiated in the non-whites.... In its turn this impairment of the personality core led to a lowering of the resistance threshold against tension and the result is loss of personal identity and eventually neurotic or psychotic breakdown” (p. 13). By focusing on the psychological sequelae of racial integration among non-whites, la Grange deploys the technique of *prolepsis* (Billig, 1996, p. 269), forestalling possible objections by turning to the authority of science. He is using a hidden *disclaimer* that, if it were to be repeated out loud, would sound something like, “I’m not racist – but the facts of racial integration speak for themselves.” And, because he makes the case for other racial groups to establish their own psychological societies for the sake of their mental health, he legitimates PIRSA’s existence further. Over and above its other virtues, apartheid is an ethical policy that guarantees the survival and development of all groups in a

veelvolkigge (multi-ethnic) polity. In fact, “[o]nly those who for one or other reason refuse to be themselves or refuse to accept themselves will refuse to accept the principle of separate societies for separate racial groups” (1962, p. 13). As the product of science and ethics, la Grange’s *logos* is difficult to overturn.

He then turns to the second of the three questions: the psychological principles that underpin the state’s policy of separate development. As with much of his speech, la Grange continues to work intertextually, in this case referencing a text “only in order to contest and reject” it (Fairclough, 1992, p. 122). He opposes Otto Klineberg’s view that “we simply do not know how or why [racial differences] arose in the first place” by second-guessing Klineberg’s scientific standing and asserting that he contradicts himself in his argument. Whether la Grange’s attack on Klineberg had anything to do with the latter’s reservations about South Africa’s future admittance to the International Union of Scientific Psychology, cannot be determined (Dumont & Louw, 2001). Even so, la Grange is not Afrikanerdom’s typical ideologue: though he may declare the only “true” Christians to be Afrikaners, he takes the trouble of addressing himself to someone of Klineberg’s eminence. Despite PIRSA’s laager mentality, la Grange signals his ongoing affiliation with the international psychological community.

How on earth can a person reconcile it if a „scientist’ like Klineberg gives the assurance that we do not know how or why differences between races arose, but in the same breath says that he is certain that the differences are not due to racial differences, in other words that inherited factors play no role therein? (1962, p. 15)

The charge of inconsistency is a rhetorical device that provides grounds for refutation. La Grange proceeds to quote Carl Jung for whom “resistances to psychological enlightenment are based in large measure on fear” (ibid.). That is, Klineberg’s oversight is the result of fear: it is not Afrikaners that are afraid but supporters of “the superficial American psychometric-statistical approach” (p. 16). Drawing on Jung’s concept of a *collective unconscious*, la Grange then theorizes an unbridgeable divide that separates the two-thousand-year-long evolution of Western Christianity from “[t]he Christian-conditioned primitive person [who] in the long run cannot satisfy the higher requirements of the true Christian civilization” (ibid.). “True” Christianity, meanwhile, is to be distinguished from what is practiced in Western Europe, since “[p]erhaps it is a fact that western Europe indeed was never truly Christian” (ibid.). In disputing the essence of Christianity, la Grange uses *dissociation* to separate its „true’ and „false’ forms (Billig, 1996, p. 181), before delivering his *coup de grace* that casts in stone the impossibility of racial integration:

Who knows! But one thing is certain: If it is true that two thousand years were too few for the true Christianity to take root in the deepest core of the western person, how can we ever (humanly speaking) assume that a period of two or three centuries will suffice for it to take root in the deepest core of Africa's barbarism? (la Grange, 1962, p. 17)

La Grange concludes his address by listing what he believes should be PIRSA's main objectives: the establishment of a professional board, the institution of appropriate theoretical and practical training facilities for all categories of psychologists, and the provision of assistance to other racial groups seeking to form their own psychological societies. Foremost, however, are "the urgent demands [presented by] the social questions that at a national level are coming stronger to the fore... [and] that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (ibid.). For la Grange, these issues include alcoholism, traffic accidents and road safety, family disintegration, national mental health, moral decay and youth criminality.

In sum, la Grange provides natural, psychological, ethical and religious justifications for the existence of a whites-only association, implying that SAPA's racial integration runs counter to the cosmic order. He fixes PIRSA's mission to matters of 'social relevance', inaugurating the new association not as a learned society where knowledge is to be shared and enjoyed for its own sake, but as a forum in which psychological expertise should be brought to bear on the national affairs of the day. With the country on the brink of obliteration, South Africa is dependent consequently on PIRSA's "service orientation" (Strümpfer, 1993, p. 6). La Grange again:

It is my heartfelt wish that PIRSA, out of the strength of its will to live and serve, will grow into an institution that will earn the recognition and love not only of its own people but also of its other-raced [anderrassige] fellow citizens who, through its benefaction, [will] fulfill themselves in happiness and independence in their own associations in service to their own people. (1962, p. 18)

DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the consequences of the SAPA-PIRSA split, SAPA's first secretary, Daan Swiegers, suggests that it ended up dividing the academy:

*The English universities have a different... thought pattern.... If you speak to the guys at Wits or UCT [University of Cape Town] or Natal, they communicate in the first instance scientifically with the outside world. They do research that is internationally relevant – their audience is in the world out there. The Afrikaans universities... [their] activities are more South African-oriented – what is done here will not for example get an ear in the outside world.*⁷⁶

⁷⁶Daan Swiegers and Wynand Herholdt joint interview, May 1982, p. 12. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

One reading of la Grange's positioning of psychology at the service of an imperiled nation will describe it as typical of an Afrikaner sentiment that values service to the *volk* more than anything. The Afrikaner psyche was hypervigilant when it came to the preservation of its group. Built up over centuries, this unique sensitivity spanned, *inter alia*, the survival fears of early slave-owners concerned about disruptions to the ready flow of human cattle, the apprehensions of burghers at the frontier worried about the „barbarization' of their offspring, the peaceful revolt of the Voortrekkers (1836–1884) against the perceived threats of *gelykstelling* (social leveling) and cultural assimilation, the catastrophic reversals of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) and the pernicious decades-long consequences of the *volk*'s subsequent urbanization – sympathetically termed the „poor white problem' (Giliomee, 2003).

As had been the case for much of its history, *survival* remained the *leitmotif* of the mid-twentieth century *volk*. Three centuries had not dulled its frontier mentality: there were democrats, republicans, anarchists, atheists and *rooi gespuis* („red scum') all of whom NP security policy from the sixties onwards would deem enemies of the state (D. O'Meara, 1996). La Grange is in survival mode when he catalogues “the social questions... that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence” (1962, p. 17). As countless others before him had done, he reminds his audience that they inhabit the “southern extremity of Africa” (p. 8), accentuating intertextually the precariousness of the divine Afrikaner calling.⁷⁷ Chastened in a crucible of successive tribulations, la Grange's *volk* remains in need of practical solutions rather than obscure meanderings. For, just as the exigencies of life in the New World had given birth to American pragmatism, the perpetually endangered *volk* is not about to fiddle while Pretoria burns. Chronicling the beginnings of American civilization, Boorstin (1958, pp. 5-6) writes of how

[t]he Puritans in the Wilderness – away from Old World centers of learning, far from great university libraries, threatened daily by the thousand and one hardships and perils of a savage America – were poorly situated for elaborating a theology and disputing its fine points. For such an enterprise John Calvin in Switzerland or William Ames in Holland was much better located.... So it was that although the Puritans in the New World made the

⁷⁷ For example, D.F. Malan opines about how God “[i]n his wisdom... determined that on the southern point of Africa, the dark continent, a People should be born who would be the bearer of Christian culture and civilization” (Die Transvaler, December 16, 1942 quoted in Moodie, 1975, p. 248). Elsewhere, Broederbond chairman Joon van Rooy interprets the God-given uniqueness of “the Afrikaner People [as assisting them to] fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa” (Die Burger, October 11, 1944 quoted in Moodie, 1975, p. 110). And again, this time in a newspaper editorial: “The Day of the Covenant is indeed the day of inspiration for the People. It is the day upon which the heart-strings of the People are tuned in harmony with the great Divine Plan here on the southern point of Africa” (Die Transvaler, December 15, 1945 quoted in Moodie, 1975, p. 21).

Calvinist theology their point of departure, they made it precisely that and nothing else. From it they departed at once into the practical life.

According to Peter Lambley, although

Afrikaners today go to church more than most people... the kind of immoral boer society [of centuries past] still persists today. Religion, values and the like are changed and used today according to the demands of the state, just as they were by the frontier boers in the nineteenth century. (1980, pp. 209, 214)

He remarks caustically that “[i]f the *trekboers* [nomadic pastoralists] had strictly applied the embargoes advocated by Calvinism on immorality – gambling, drinking, gossiping and dancing – their social lives would have quickly come to an end for there was little else to do but gambling, drinking, gossiping and dancing” (ibid., p. 20). In a more charitable tone, Jonathan Jansen argues that, as an ethnic minority, Afrikaners in contemporary South Africa remain a “pragmatic” community with a history of adjusting themselves to difficult circumstances (2009, pp. 237-238).⁷⁸ In fact, as far back as 1918, N.J. Brummer had eulogized

[t]he Afrikaner [as] utilitarian. „Useful’ is his favourite word. Everything is judged according to its usefulness for living. The Afrikaner will therefore not do any science for science’s sake, but because it can be of service to him. The Afrikaner university will therefore have to strive above all to make the student suitable for the more responsible positions in society. (Brummer, 1918, p. 197 quoted in J. Louw, 1986a, p. 81)

There are several problems that arise when taking the notion of Afrikaner pragmatism too literally. For one, it leans heavily on the kind of cultural essentialism that dominated racist NP discourse. Second, the idea of an historically monolithic Afrikaner nation, positively identifiable across four centuries, leads inevitably to debates about ‘invented communities’ that have troubled historians in recent years. Third, if Afrikaners were really so pragmatic, one would have expected them to have seen the political writing on the wall considerably earlier than they eventually did – that they did not, was due to differing degrees of pragmatism in the NP, with the realists in the Cape offsetting the insular die-hards of the North. And fourth, when linking American to Afrikaner pragmatism, it is important to keep in mind that, conceptually, the philosophical pragmatism of the former is a different prospect to having merely a practical outlook on life.

To explain more adequately the ‘service orientation’ of Afrikaner psychology, one needs to look beyond oversimplified ideas about group traits in the direction of Christian-National ideology, the evolution of which signaled a significant departure from previous

⁷⁸ Jansen cites the immortalization of Afrikaner adaptability in the Afrikaans language through the saying, “*‘n Boer maak ‘n plan*” – that is, “An Afrikaner will make a plan.”

versions of Afrikaner nationalism. When General Hertzog and his NP followers „fused’ controversially with Jan Smuts’ South African Party to form the United Party (UP) in 1934, it was only the NP’s Cape branch that was left relatively unscathed. In the affected provinces of the north, however, a key group of young urban Broederbond intellectuals took the lead in defining *gesuiwerde* (purified) Afrikaner nationalism. The problem around which their deliberations converged was the *armblanke vraagstuk* (poor white question) of the 1920s and 1930s. The devastations of the Anglo-Boer War and the lost Republics were no longer their explicit points of reference (D. O’Meara, 1996) – rather, it was the adaptive difficulties of Afrikaners in relation to capitalist agriculture and growing industrialization that galvanized their efforts. In its joint findings, the Carnegie-funded commission of inquiry into the poor white question reported that

[l]ong-continued economic equality of poor whites and the great mass of non-Europeans, and propinquity of their dwellings, tend to bring them to social equality. This impairs the tradition which counteracts miscegenation, and the social line of colour division is noticeably weakening. (Grosskopf, 1932, p. xx)

The future existence of a discrete Afrikaner nation hung in the balance. In the hands of these young intellectuals, the emerging doctrine elevated above everything the idea of *volksgebondenheid* (ethnic solidarity):

... the belief that ties of blood and volk come first, and that the individual existed only in and through the nation. The volk, rather than the individual, was the divinely ordained basic unit of social organisation. Individuals could realise their ‘true’ selves and social potential only in identification with and service to the volk. (D. O’Meara, 1996, p. 41)

South Africa was the divinely ordained homeland of an Afrikaner nation, charged with the sacred task of establishing a Calvinist republic and liberated from the chains of British imperialism, „Hoggenheimer’⁷⁹ capitalism and godless communism. But despite the meticulous articulation of Christian-National dogma during “the 1930s and 1940s [it] was an almost purely intellectual affair, conducted in the inner circles of party, press, Broederbond and church. The broad mass of Afrikaans-speakers displayed scant interest in these abstruse philosophical/theological debates” (ibid., pp. 41-42). Most Afrikaners still voted for Hertzog’s UP in 1938 and did so once more in 1943 – notwithstanding the ruling party’s support of Britain during the war. It was only after accommodating Christian-National ideology to the lived experiences of Afrikaners throughout the country that gains were made. During the forties, by appealing to “the economic disadvantages of speaking Afrikaans in an

⁷⁹ An anti-Semitic reference to the imperialist-capitalist connection in the South African Party, ‘Hoggenheimer’ was a cartoon character in the Afrikaans-language daily, *Die Burger*, and was “English-speaking, imperialist, and clearly Jewish” (Moodie, 1975, p. 15).

Anglophone-controlled economy, under a government minimally concerned with the fate of the Afrikaans language” (ibid., p. 42), the Broederbond launched a highly effective economic-cultural-educational mobilization campaign that targeted emerging Afrikaner business and labor via a proliferation of civic associations.⁸⁰

For its part, the NP – once it had gotten its house in order – capitalized on the new broad-based alliance by preaching an intoxicating doctrine of Afrikaner exclusivism that would have found favor with an audience defined as oppressed by virtue of being Afrikaner. Indeed, it won the 1948 polls – albeit narrowly – because of this fledgling Afrikaner *volksbeweging* (people’s movement). Before the elections, the NP had downplayed its republican ambitions: within the party and beyond, the republican manifesto was not unanimously supported and threatened the greater good of *volkseenheid* (people’s unity). It decided instead to run its campaign by focusing on consensus-driven issues, namely, mother-tongue education, the communist threat (“*rooi gevaar*”) and apartheid, interpreting each through the lens of Christian-Nationalism. While the election victory could be explained in terms of the changing support bases of Smuts’ UP and Malan’s NP, the former’s political ineptitude and considerable post-war social changes (D. O’Meara, 1996), it owed as much to Christian-National ideology, Broederbond support and, still, the civil theology (Moodie, 1975).

Following the NP’s upset victory, this theology took even more of a backseat as the party went about broadening its support base. Consequently, neither of its first two prime ministers – the “convinced republican” D.F. Malan (1948-1954) and the “fiery republican” J.G. Strijdom (1954-1958) – made much noise about declaring a republic (Moodie, 1975, p. 282). The republican ideal had been central to Afrikaner civil theology since its enunciation by Paul Kruger, president of the South African (Transvaal) Republic from 1881 to 1900. Although the civil religion did not represent at the outset all of Afrikanerdom, “conceived as a constellation of symbols [it was] held fairly universally and consistently by Afrikaners at least since the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902” (ibid., p. 295). Afrikaner civil religion was rooted in the sacred history of the *volk* that was, in the words of Malan,

... nothing other than the greatest artwork of the centuries. We have a right to this nationhood because it was given to us by the Architect of the universe. The aim of the Architect was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world... A miracle has occurred in the last hundred years, a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan. The history of the Afrikaner

⁸⁰ Moodie notes in passing James Luther Adams’ observation that “Calvinism encourages the formation of voluntary associations” (1975, p. 106).

signifies resoluteness and a determination, which leaves a person feeling that Afrikanerdom is not the work of people but the creation of God. (Malan, 1964, pp. 235-236)⁸¹

The “miracle” to which Malan was referring, was the epic tale of survival of a persecuted Afrikaner community. Against all odds, the *volk* had weathered eighteenth-century Dutch East India Company oppression, nineteenth-century British liberalism and Anglicization policies, the Slagtersnek gallows of 1815, the Kaffir War of 1834, the treacherous murders of Piet Retief and his deputation at Blaauwkrantz, the successive British annexations of the Natalia, Orange Free State and Transvaal Republics, the deaths of 26 000 Afrikaner women and children in British concentration camps, the death-in-exile of Paul Kruger and the martyrdom of Jopie Fourie. In short, Afrikaner sacred history was “made up of two cycles of suffering and death – the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War” (Moodie, 1975, p. 12). But although the suffering was redemptive, “the logic of Christian theodicy [did] not rest alone in the notion of suffering for righteousness’ sake” and provided for a much-anticipated resurrection (ibid., p. 13). Just as the Groot Trek had culminated in the foundation of the Afrikaner republics, the woes of the Anglo-Boer War would eventually be transformed into “a republican second coming” (ibid., p. 14). God had brought Afrikanerdom to the Promised Land and would do so again.

Resisting the allure of its republican ideals, the NP busied itself with the consolidation of its still tenuous hold on power: the civil religion lost its place to pragmatism and bureaucratization while the Broederbond became better known for reserving *baantjies vir boeties* (jobs for pals) (ibid., p. 102; D. O'Meara, 1996, p. 44). Nonetheless, the 1950s and 1960s would prove the highpoint for Christian-Nationalism, while the task of exploiting it in the service of apartheid policy fell to H.F. Verwoerd and the Afrikaner intellectual elite.

To be sure, by the mid-1940s, the Christian-National exegesis of Afrikaner sacred history was already the standard version of the civil religion. In 1944, then Broederbond chairman Joon van Rooy summed up Christian-National philosophy in a speech delivered in Stellenbosch:

In every People in the world is embodied a Divine Idea and the task of each People is to build upon that Idea and to perfect it. So God created the Afrikaner People with a unique language, a unique philosophy of life, and their own history and tradition in order that they might fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa. We must stand guard on all that is peculiar to us and build upon it. We must believe that God has called us to be servants of his righteousness in this place. We must walk the way of obedience to faith... (Die Burger, October 11, 1944 quoted in Moodie, 1975, pp. 110-111)

⁸¹ Translated from the original Afrikaans.

It had also been decided in that year's *Volkskongres* of the Broederbond-inspired *Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurorganisasies* (F.A.K.) that

... it is in the interest of both the white and non-white in South Africa that a policy of apartheid be followed so that non-white ethnic groups will also have the opportunity to develop according to their own nature, in their own area, and ultimately to obtain full control over their own affairs there. (Inspan, October 1944 quoted ibid., p. 263)

It was the Christian-National responsibility of whites that they enter into a relationship of trusteeship with non-whites, acting as guardians until the latter had attained a sufficient level of maturity to administer their affairs independently (Dubow, 1995):

In order to give the natives sufficient opportunities freely to realize their national aspirations, they must be provided with separate areas which will be administered and developed initially for them and eventually by them as self-ruling native areas in which the whites may have no rights of citizenship. (Inspan, 1944 quoted in Moodie, 1975, p. 273)

Apartheid was justified on the grounds that it was God's Will that "the Afrikaner... implement it for the well-being of black and white alike" (Moodie, 1975, p. 248). Correspondingly, racial integration was sinful.

Fifteen years after the 1944 *Volkskongres*, when de Wet Nel stood before Parliament with the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill, he would state in full the F.A.K.'s conclusions, reiterating that Christian-Nationalism was as important for „the white man' as it was for „the Bantu'. Apartheid policy no longer amounted to a purely „negative' defense of the white race against degenerative miscegenation but had a „positive' aspect too – the creation of a segregated yet prosperous and peaceful multi-racial society. With a subtle shift in the nomenclature, negative apartheid was transformed into Verwoerd's positive-sounding „theory of separate development.'⁸²

The evolution of Christian-Nationalism explains how, in 1962, la Grange was able to deny the longstanding view that the apartheid concept of „self-preservation' was premised on whites' annihilatory fears.⁸³ He could even appeal to the wisdom and generosity of Christian-National logic: not only would a non-white association preserve the mental health of its

⁸² As prime minister, Verwoerd was alert to the Black Nationalist sentiment taking hold across the continent: "[We] cannot govern without taking into account the tendencies in the world and in Africa. We must have regard to them. We are... taking steps to ensure that we adopt a policy by which we on the one hand can retain for the white man full control in his areas, but by which we are giving the Bantu as our wards every opportunity in their areas to move along a road of development by which they can progress in accordance with their ability" (Pelzer, 1966, p. 243 quoted in Moodie, 1975, p. 264).

⁸³ The NP had come to power by reminding the electorate repeatedly of a "sea" – an "inundation" (*oorstroming*) – of blacks (D. O'Meara, 1996, p. 34). The metaphor of an unstoppable black deluge – not infrequently tinged with sexual anxiety – had animated the South African political landscape for decades. Fanon (2008) and Kamin (1993) have written about the sexualization of black identity in European and American contexts.

members, PIRSA would extend a paternalistic hand to its “other-raced [*anderrassige*] fellow citizens who, through its benefaction, [would] fulfill themselves in happiness and independence in their own associations in service to their own people” (la Grange, 1962, p. 18). When la Grange listed the various *sosiale vraagstukke* (social problems) that warranted disciplinary attention, he was not only thinking as an enterprising applied scientist but was adumbrating the Christian-National injunction of serving the *volk*. His own doctoral supervisors had done just that some three decades earlier: Raymond Wilcocks (1932) – “the doyen of Psychology in South Africa, the unforgettable professor” (van der Merwe, 1977, p. 1) – served the *volk* by producing the Carnegie Commission’s psychological report on poor whiteism, while Verwoerd became a leading advocate on the issue, assisting in organizing the 1934 *Volkskongres*.

In his report, Wilcocks urged the establishment of

... a thoroughly well-equipped department of social studies at one of our South African Universities, where skilled social workers will be trained, and where one of South Africa’s most important social problems will be assured of receiving that degree of scientific attention which it truly deserves. (Wilcocks, 1932, p. 181)

The faculty at Stellenbosch University obliged by creating the country’s first Department of Sociology and Social Work before the report was even published – with Wilcocks’ former student, Verwoerd, at the helm (Balstad Miller, 1993). From its earliest years, la Grange’s Stellenbosch University had associated itself closely with “the Afrikaner and his „struggle”” (J. Louw, 1986a, p. 81). Despite his belief in the heritability of intelligence, Wilcocks inclined towards environmental causes when it came to the substandard test performances of poor white children – evidence of his sensitivity to Afrikaner nationalist claims (Dubow, 1995). As professor of applied psychology, Verwoerd opened the 1929 academic year by reiterating the university’s mission, namely, the preparation of the student for a vocational life – which meant serving the *volk* (J. Louw, 1986a).⁸⁴ Indeed, this study will demonstrate how Afrikaner psychologists advanced a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service) that demanded not only a „socially relevant’ discipline but, increasingly, research of „ethnic-national relevance’.

⁸⁴ Although Balstad Miller (1993) makes the important point that Verwoerd was not a strident Afrikaner nationalist during his years as an academic, she cannot account conclusively for his later conversion. At the very least, it seems likely that he would have been influenced to some degree by the intellectual milieu in which he studied and taught for almost two decades – and his 1929 address suggests as much.

SAPA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1962 (B.J. SCHLEBUSCH)

A day before la Grange, Barend Johannes Schlebusch delivered his address as SAPA president at the University of the Witwatersrand. A year on from the Stellenbosch debacle, the erstwhile University of Pretoria colleagues found themselves on opposing sides of the political divide. According to then council member, Deo Strümpfer, the mood at SAPA was one of “exhaustion” and “sadness” for, despite its terminally insoluble ‘race’ question, the association’s affairs had been proceeding smoothly prior to the split, particularly with regard to the urgent matter of professional registration (personal communication, March 10, 2012). PIRSA, by contrast, was on the offensive, launching an aggressive recruitment drive. A.B. van der Merwe had returned to Stellenbosch University’s Department of Psychology and instructed his staff to join the new association’s ranks – no questions asked. When an offending junior contradicted van der Merwe, he was warned after the meeting that if he questioned his head of department about such matters again, he would find himself on the margins (ibid.). Elsewhere, two of PIRSA’s other top lieutenants – Robbertse and Bekker – had distributed a circular informing all civil servants in possession of at least a bachelor’s degree in psychology that they had to register as PIRSA members.

PIRSA’s numbers grew exponentially. In the coming years, SAPA – with its membership drastically reduced – would find itself in the unfamiliar position of having to convene its meetings in conspicuously low-profile settings. Even its archives for the ensuing decade-and-a-half (1963–1977) would disappear mysteriously. Its one-time secretary, Dev Griesel, remarks blandly in a letter to the director of the National Library of South Africa:

*We do not publish the proceedings of our annual congresses. Persons who attend the congress and our own members receive a copy of the summaries of papers read at the congress but in no way is this a publication.*⁸⁵

Few could have predicted the rapid decline in SAPA’s fortunes or, for that matter, that la Grange would write Schlebusch’s obituary eight years on from the split. Since 1948, SAPA had been run more or less by Afrikaners: the English universities of Natal, the Witwatersrand and especially Cape Town had never taken much interest in the association’s activities (K. Danziger, personal communication, March 8, 2012).⁸⁶ As a result, the mass exodus of Afrikaner psychologists in 1962 was a significant setback not only for the SAPA leadership but for its administration too. Along with Strümpfer, Bob Schlebusch was one of a handful of Afrikaners who withstood considerable pressure to remain with SAPA. Schlebusch, however,

⁸⁵ Dated February 20, 1979, National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.

⁸⁶ This contradicts Robbertse’s claim regarding the position of Afrikaner psychologists within SAPA (quoted above): “We didn’t count – we were nowhere.”

was in the unenviable position of finding himself its new president, the inheritor of a fractured and demoralized society. Nothing like the la Grange of 1962, he was no *vuurvreter* (firebrand), but while his fellow members were keen to put the recent debacle to bed, Schlebusch was not quite done.

ANALYSIS

Schlebusch (1963) begins his address by thanking the audience for doing him the honor of electing him the fourth president of SAPA. Unlike his counterpart – who petitions the *logos* of the PIRSA audience – Schlebusch, in his opening remarks, harnesses the attentions of his constituency through ingratiation, invoking his *ethos* as speaker. He accomplishes this, first, by expressing his gratitude to an approving audience; second, by pledging his loyalty to an association made vulnerable by a bitter secession; and third, by paying his respects to a former SAPA luminary (and leading member of the breakaway party) whose position he has just assumed:

*I have attempted and will continue to strive to serve the interests of the association to the best of my ability. To our retired president, Prof A.B. van der Merwe, although no longer a member of the association, on behalf of you I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the competent manner in which he furthered the interests and goals of the association and wish him the best for the future. (p. 3)*⁸⁷

Ethical appeals are common when faced with an ambivalent audience: by appealing to the goodness of one's character and will, the listener is more inclined to being influenced by other logical (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) appeals (Corbett & Connors, 1999).

Unexpectedly, Schlebusch then informs his listeners that he will *not*, after all, be delivering a presidential address:

At a conference on group dynamics in Leicester, England, it occurred to me how all the speakers began by saying that it was practically impossible to discuss such a broad subject in such a short time. I became so obstreperous about this that when I myself was allotted half an hour for a certain subject, I began by saying that I actually only need fifteen minutes for the subject but will at least attempt to devote half an hour to it. I am afraid that this is becoming true today. While I wanted to deliver a presidential address, because of the almost unbelievable convergence of events, the time to develop it was lacking. Instead of working on an address on psychodynamics, I had to be satisfied with a substitute and had to ask the congress's organizing committee to present it simply as „The president speaks.’ I would like to apologize for this and express a few thoughts about the possible contribution of literature to psychological study. (1963, p. 3)

It is not immediately clear how the interpretation of this passage should proceed. Schlebusch resorts to what Corbett and Connors call an *introduction narrative* (1999, p. 263): he uses the anecdotal lead-in as he attempts to pique the audience's interest in his subject,

⁸⁷ Schlebusch's address was delivered in Afrikaans.

although the anecdote itself is laced with humor and disappointment. As for what it is that can possibly have upset Schlebusch on this occasion, he does not tell, but that he *is* perturbed is communicated through the admission that he did not have sufficient opportunity to pen a presidential address. He makes mention of “the almost unbelievable convergence of events” that robbed him of the requisite time but stops short of giving details – though his use of the *definite* article suggests that his audience is privy to the nature of these events anyway. While la Grange is willing to air the dirty laundry in public, Schlebusch offers only an obliquely disapproving reference to the bitterness of recent months. Instead, he resorts to pedantries by explaining how he approached the organizing committee to recast his address as „The president speaks’. And then he apologizes for no clear reason. Perhaps he feels guilty for claiming to feel honored by the society while appearing simultaneously to distance himself from the very position with which has been honored. Perhaps he feels he has let his audience down, which has gathered in troubled days in anticipation of a reassuring presidential statement rather than “a few thoughts.” Perhaps he is apologizing for wanting to talk about literature, rather than psychodynamics, at the single most important event on the society’s calendar. Or perhaps the audience – well aware of “the almost unbelievable convergence of events” – already knows what the apology is for.

Schlebusch now moves on to the *narratio* (statement of fact) by citing the founding of Wundt’s laboratory in 1879 as a milestone in the development of the discipline, acknowledging how psychology in its early days adopted an empirical-scientific perspective modeled on the physical sciences:

No one will find fault with this, and everyone will agree that this development was absolutely necessary and will become even more necessary in the future. (1963, p. 4)

Proceeding to the *confutatio* (refutation) by logical appeal, he draws attention to the fact that,

with the main and almost singular emphasis on this [empirical-scientific perspective], another equally important aspect was frequently pushed to the background. I am referring to the fact that a person can also think scientifically – your thoughts can be subjected to the objectivity that is demanded in the execution of an experiment. (ibid.)

Schlebusch argues against a narrow empiricism that does not allow for the investigation of “subtle behavioral expressions... [and] frequently prevents an analysis of the deeper-seated psychodynamics of the individual” (p. 4). Describing the intricacies of the psychotherapeutic encounter, he insists that

[i]f a scientifically-schooled mind observes [patient and therapist behavior] the subjective observation and the observation of the subjective can indeed be objective and scientific. (p. 5)

For his *confirmatio* (proof), Schlebusch praises the work of the novelist Thomas Mann for its astute observations on the nature of grief. But this serves merely to justify the main focus of his talk, namely, literary depictions of social conformity, to which he now “brings to bear ,all the available means of persuasion’ to support the cause he is espousing” (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 11).

After reading Schlebusch’s full address, one wonders why he does not simply title it „The consequences of majority influence’. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, just as he shuns direct reference to the politics of the SAPA-PIRSA schism, Schlebusch is clearing the decks for an allegorical attack on *volksgebondenheid* – that is, the Afrikaner group solidarity that hastened the split. Seeing as there are still a number of Afrikaners in the audience – least of all himself – he does not name the object of his assault directly. He is, after all, the president of Anglophone SAPA: any criticism of Afrikanerdom will likely offend even dissident Afrikaners if it is perceived as originating in the outgroup (Louw-Potgieter, 1986 cited in Billig, 1996). Instead, he executes the face-threatening act by using an *off record* strategy, retaining his politeness by saying things in a roundabout way (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60 quoted in Fairclough, 1992, p. 164). He accomplishes this by expressing an undirected dissatisfaction with the latter-day “domination of the group” in which “slavery and autocracy” have reappeared parading themselves as “freedom”, but because of the dissimulation, embody an even stronger form of “utter bondage” (Schlebusch, 1963, p. 6):

Whereas the individual formed the group to protect himself, the group became the monster that used the individual to protect itself. (ibid.)

Drawing on Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd*, Schlebusch describes the outcome as a “dependence on the group... [that] led to standardization and inflexibility not only of behavior but also of thought and creative activities” (ibid.). It is Colin Wilson’s “cult of the ordinary chap” (p. 7) that has snatched the accolades while Ayn Rand’s protagonists – “being rebellious purely for the sake of rebellion” (p. 8) – are hardly heroes at all. Although he criticizes Rand’s depiction of heroism, Schlebusch appears sympathetic to the objectivist philosophy that

the great inventor and creator should not be motivated by the needs of his fellow people but by his search for the truth, by vision, strength and courage that springs from his own spirit. (ibid.)

He asks the audience to consider whether in fact “this tyranny of the group” (ibid.) has gained such a foothold that the age of heroes – individuals in the truest sense – has passed.

The extensive use of nominalizations – “domination of the group”, “standardization and inflexibility”, “this tyranny of the group” – allows Schlebusch to register his point from afar without having to wade into the messiness of SAPA-PIRSA politics. It is the *individual* – the hero – that he wishes to rescue from this state of affairs, which is why

psychologists must make greater use of novels with the specific goal of using the shrewd observations of the writer for training [themselves] in observation and especially for further interpretation.... Changes in the social structure, as mentioned, and the individual's reaction thereto, are frequently reflected first in the works of great writers. (p. 9, added emphasis)

And yet, for Schlebusch, Rand's account of her heroes' internal conflicts is inadequate. Accordingly,

[t]he psychodynamic elaboration of the heroes' reactions will be extremely interesting.... Intensive knowledge of these social processes and individual reactions thereto is in different areas so important that it must be investigated in all possible sources. (ibid., added emphasis)

The minutiae of human sociality essential to individual psychotherapy are lost in the psychological report's “dead succession of cold facts” (ibid.). Moreover, in the field of organizational psychology,

the work context... that can bring to the fore or even strengthen the anxieties created by the social order is overlooked besides. The immovable standardization [the worker encounters] in social life he must now negotiate even more acutely in his work situation. (ibid.)

Schlebusch bemoans the standardization of thinking itself. A situation has arisen where success in the world of politics depends on one's affiliation with a strong party, while, in research circles, it hinges on “being a team member in a big organization like the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, such that most books nowadays appear under the writer, „edited by'” (p. 10). The dearth of knowledge that human beings have about themselves is the result of being “caught up in [this] narrow passage in which [our] culture allows us to think” (ibid.). Psychological studies must become correspondingly “more alive” and “more interesting” by breaking out of “the conventional mentality” (ibid.).

DISCUSSION

By the end of his address, it is easier to appreciate the significance of Schlebusch's puzzling introduction. In what is predominantly a deliberative piece of oratory, he exhorts a new direction for South African psychology – chiefly methodological – in which parochial allegiances are to be set aside. In terms of his rhetorical style, the president foregoes candor for subtlety, initiating his audience into a literary world of manifold meanings where process becomes as revealing as content. Conversely, Schlebusch's use of an off record strategy facilitates a potentially high degree of propositional *affinity* (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 123

quoted in Fairclough, 1992, p. 158). That is, because he performs his face-threatening act through insinuation, he is able to state his case more or less emphatically. Time and again, he manages medium- to high-affinity *epistemic* (probability) and *deontic* (obligational) *modalities* (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 146) by using appropriate modal auxiliary verbs (“must”, “should”, “will”, “can”), modal adverbs (“indeed”) and modal adjectives (“necessary”). Moreover, by having frequent recourse to the present tense, he disregards the academic norm of avoiding the *categorical* modality, while generating presidential gravitas (Fairclough, 1992, p. 162). Schlebusch reinforces his authority through these modalities – the power vacuum created by the mass exodus of high-ranking Afrikaner psychologists demands as much – urging the association to follow his lead.

Yet he seems simultaneously to abandon his community of practice, presenting himself as a modified Randist maverick released from jingoistic groupthink. In casting mainstream politics, big industry and society in general (“*die maatskappy*”) in the role of villain with their unending “pressures and demands” (p. 9), Schlebusch takes a dig at his Afrikaner colleagues for capitulating to the machinations of big-time politics. After all, it was Prime Minister Verwoerd who, three months earlier, had informed a triumvirate of Stellenbosch University professors comprising A.J. la Grange, A.B. van der Merwe and J.M. du Toit:

*But look, if you are then developing in this direction – SAPA, I am after all an honorary member – then I am now obliged to terminate my honorary membership immediately. I can hardly belong to an association that is in direct conflict with our country’s policy [of racial segregation]. How can I belong to it? I must terminate it immediately.*⁸⁸

As Robbertse would observe years later, “At that time, Dr Verwoerd did South Africa’s thinking to a great degree.”^{89,90}

Whereas la Grange venerates the *volk* and so can hardly do otherwise than to offer the discipline in service to the nation, Schlebusch adopts an opposing stance, driving a wedge between psychology and broader society. In effect, the two men are arguing about the independence of science: la Grange pursues the ‘social relevance’ of a committed Afrikaner nationalist while Schlebusch desires the disinterested freedom of the intellectual pioneer. La

⁸⁸ Quoted in the Newsletter of the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa, August 1962, Vol. 1, p. 13. The passage – translated from the original Afrikaans – is taken from a statement delivered by la Grange at PIRSA’s founding meeting on June 23, 1962.

⁸⁹ P.M. Robbertse interview, May 12, 1982, p. 13. Translated from the original Afrikaans.

⁹⁰ In a remarkably similar turn of phrase, Verwoerd’s successor, B.J. Vorster, reminisced at the first cabinet meeting after the prime minister’s assassination: “Dr Verwoerd was an intellectual giant. He did the thinking for each one of us” (Schoeman, 1974, p. 14 quoted in D. O’Meara, 1996, p. 112).

Grange like a sledgehammer, Schlebusch as a thief in the night, the vehemence of state and the elegance of science collide in an attritional battle of rhetorical styles.

Of course, for Schlebusch, it is not solely about science for science's sake, but an associated liberal tradition that resonates with the English speakers in the audience. Despite delivering his speech in Afrikaans, he makes no mention of the Afrikaans literary canon, eschewing it in favor of English-language classics. Schlebusch presents himself as an Anglicized Afrikaner, expressing solidarity with white English-speaking South Africans (WESSAs). Prior to the republican declaration of 1961, WESSAs tended to divide their loyalties between Britain (the homeland) and South Africa (the colony). Now, in the wake of the NP's shock electoral victory, the ethnic mobilization of Afrikanerdom and the split from the British Commonwealth, the question for WESSAs was whether they had any home at all (Foley, 1992). But even with the "identity crisis" (ibid., p. 16) that was in part the result of their heterogeneous composition, a discrete WESSA cohort distinguished itself through its social, cultural and political progressiveness. This grouping of WESSAs

is associated with university education, with high socio-economic status, with occupations in education and service sector of the economy, and with non-affiliation to a religious denomination.... [It] also seems to be related to anti-materialistic attitudes, opposition to authoritarian political measures, lower needs for in-group identification, a secular outlook, a non-patriotic orientation, a non-traditional moral outlook, a belief in the social and political responsibility of the Church, and with a sophisticated view of literature, art and intellectual activity. (Schlemmer, 1976, p. 124)

Schlebusch's speech is an oratorical *tour de force* that displays almost all of the above. His valorization of inspired individualism serves as antidote to the "clumsy hatchet jobs" in which WESSAs are reviled as imperialist "bastards", "pseudo-liberal weaklings" and "ghosts with ears" (Banning, 1989 quoted in Foley, 1991, p. 15). Yet his disdain for politics does not make him one of a near majority of WESSAs described as

political introverts... less concerned with encouraging a practical solution to South Africa's problems, more concerned with preserving a „White' heritage, more concerned simply with leading a quiet, respectable life and more concerned with protecting the standards of the social class to which they belong. (Schlemmer, 1976, p. 124, original emphases)

Kurt Danziger, for example, whose opposition to apartheid injustice earned him the wrath of then Minister of Justice B.J. Vorster and a one-way exit permit in 1965, attributes his non-involvement in the SAPA-PIRSA „race' controversy to the episode's patent absurdity (personal communication, January 2011). Likewise, when Schlebusch stops short of „outing' an issue that must have been foremost in the minds of his listeners, he is employing the rhetorical trick of undermining an opposing position by virtue of withholding what would be

a dignifying response (Billig, 1996). The SAPA president's reticence is not the mark of a political introvert but of Schlemmer's "political activist" (1976, p. 124).

The general ascription of political apathy to South African psychology in its entirety overlooks the "tradition of dissent" among an influential minority of independent-minded WESSAs (Garson, 1976, p. 37 quoted in Foley, 1991, p. 22). Then again, Schlebusch's politics does not mean that SAPA had no apartheid sympathizers – or that his brand of activism was non-ideological. After all, he may have distanced himself from the Afrikaner group ethic, but he hardly aligned himself with African nationalism either. Indeed, a politics that idealizes an amorphous (scientific) freedom but stops short of naming its object of criticism – in this case racial policy – does itself no favors. By invoking science in the struggle against apartheid, Schlebusch adopted what was a common discursive practice among English-speaking liberals (Dubow, 2001). But, having "scant awareness of themselves as a group" – and Schlebusch went assuredly to great lengths to isolate himself from any group – the WESSA appeal to science was prone to being interpreted as the political dithering not of activists but "wimps" (Foley, 1991, pp. 15-16).

When read in tandem, la Grange (1962) and Schlebusch (1963) appear to espouse significantly different views on the desirability of „relevance’ in psychology. The former's concern for the welfare of the Afrikaner *volk* anticipates PIRSA's *volksdiens* discourse of the 1960s that will compel the discipline to safeguard „our continued national existence’ from the „threat’ of „urgent social questions’. By contrast, Schlebusch seeks to uncouple psychology from societal considerations, advancing instead a *liberal-individualist* discourse that panegyricizes an almost esoteric science in which „the great inventor’ as „truth seeker’ struggles valiantly against this „tyranny of the group’. Taken together, the presidents' respective articulations provide support for Strümpfer's (1993) characterization of Afrikaner psychology as „service-oriented’ and the English version as driven by the basic science. The thesis turns now to an analysis of addresses delivered during SAPA's early years so as to account for the development of these contrasting positions.

CHAPTER 7: SAPA ADDRESSES (1950–1961)

Although contemporary psychology has in the main passed out of that phase of its immediate past history generally referred to as the ‚battle of the schools’, that does not mean that contemporary psychologists are necessarily in agreement upon fundamental issues at the present time. (Ian MacCrone, 1951)

Our association developed out of a need... for professional psychological services in this country, a gap the community feels increasingly with each passing day. (A.B. van der Merwe, 1958)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter analyzes addresses delivered in the 1950s in order to clarify the emergence of la Grange and Schlebusch’s contradictory discursive projects. The analysis identifies among Afrikaner psychologists a concern for ‚social relevance’ expressed in the shape of a *professionalist* discourse that encourages public service yet bears no trace of Christian-National influence. Among English-speaking psychologists, by contrast, ‚relevance’ is less of a priority in a discourse of *disciplinarity* concerned with fundamental debates in the field. It is argued that Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s dispensed with Christian-Nationalism not only because the NP of those years had sidelined the Broederbond, but because the primary goal of professional registration necessitated a spirit of cooperation with their Anglophone colleagues. For their part, the latter group of psychologists advanced a moderate form of Schlebusch’s liberal individualism, largely avoiding consideration of the wider public’s needs. Schlebusch’s retreatism in the wake of PIRSA’s secession, therefore, may be thought of as an intensive form of disciplinarity suspicious of any kind of social mobilization.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1950 (A.J. LA GRANGE)

In 1950, A.J. la Grange was SAPA president, a position he had held since the founding of the association in July 1948. SAPA had been established for professional reasons – chief among them the registration of trained psychologists (Foster, 2008; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). In the published summary of his address, la Grange identifies “[t]he greatest problem facing modern psychology [as] the fact that [the unprecedented demand for psychological services] is being shamelessly exploited by quacks and pseudo-psychologists of all kinds” (1950, p. 7). He adds that “[c]ondemnation and disapproval of these practices must be voiced in the strongest of terms” and recommends “[p]romulgation of an energetic short-term policy intended mainly for the protection of the title ‚psychologist” (ibid.). He advises further that SAPA membership be conditional “not only on the basis of academic and professional

qualifications, but also upon proof of a deserving reputation and high standing in public esteem” (ibid.).⁹¹ Regarding long-term policy, la Grange sets out in some detail the contents of a suitable undergraduate curriculum, proposing the introduction of a dedicated Bachelor’s degree for aspiring teachers and the provision of training facilities for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. He anticipates such outcomes as the improvement of clinical services in schools, public appreciation of psychological services, increased inter-disciplinary cooperation and “facilitation of the achievement of the ultimate goal” (p. 8): statutory recognition of the discipline.

Given the ascendancy enjoyed by Afrikaner nationalism at the time, la Grange’s non-partisanship is surprising. Granted, a public service motif does feature prominently in the address – but it is not couched in the nationalist idiom of serving the *volk*. On the political front, the newly installed NP regime did not regard the further elaboration and dissemination of Christian-National ideology as a pressing concern: because it had won the 1948 elections on a minority of votes, the party’s immediate challenge was to broaden its constituency. In a similar vein, la Grange would have understood the significance of his audience comprising “psychologists of various stripes, English and Afrikaans-speaking, liberal and conservative, [who] came together to form... SAPA” (Foster, 2008, p. 105). To persist with the Afrikaner nationalist agenda that had percolated the discipline since the formulation of the poor white question would have risked alienating his English listeners. SAPA’s forerunner, the Psychological Society, Johannesburg (PSJ), had been dominated by English-speaking psychologists (Wulfsohn, 1948) – and with registration ostensibly the new association’s „ultimate goal’, having all hands on deck was a basic prerequisite.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1951 (I.D. MACCRONE)

In July of the following year, the liberal psychologist and former president of PSJ, Ian MacCrone, delivered the opening address at the SAPA congress in Pietermaritzburg. Titled *Perspective in Psychology*, MacCrone attempts to define the discipline’s proper subject matter. He dismisses the potential role of neurophysiology in understanding human behavior for the reasons that “fundamentally it is a cock-eyed view which offends against psychology, against its own logic, and against a sound philosophy of science” (1951, p. 9). He criticizes on similar grounds stimulus-response theory, as it “seems to me to reduce behaviour to an unreal abstraction, a kind of artifact, since it consistently ignores the organism itself” (ibid.).

⁹¹ This stipulation was a far cry from the later recruitment efforts of PIRSA begun under his presidential watch.

MacCrone's address ends abruptly with him arguing instead for the importance of consciousness in behavior and self-consciousness in particular.

Simon Biesheuvel remembers MacCrone as "essentially an academic" who was not easily interested in psychological applications (1981, p. 2). Indeed, the disparity between la Grange (1950) and MacCrone – the latter was at the time of his address head of psychology at the English-language University of the Witwatersrand – cannot be starker. La Grange is already plotting the extension of the discipline into the public domain, while MacCrone has yet to move on from "the fundamental debate in psychology" – known otherwise as the "battle of the schools" (MacCrone, 1951, p. 8). Whereas la Grange restricts himself to professional issues, MacCrone immerses himself in "these fundamental issues... that go back to the beginnings of psychology as science" (ibid.). MacCrone reminds his audience that, while the „battle' may have receded in recent years, it remains unresolved. By implication, hopes for the professionalization of a „pre-paradigmatic' discipline with an undecided subject matter are misplaced – which explains in part why, despite psychologists' desire for professional registration since at least the mid-1940s, they had to wait until 1974 before the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). All hands were not on deck: MacCrone spoke a scientific vernacular familiar to English-speaking psychologists, while la Grange represented Afrikaner pragmatists eager to serve the public.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1953 (E. PRATT-YULE)

At the 1953 SAPA congress, Eleanor Pratt-Yule, long-time head of psychology at the University of Natal, delivers the opening address. Unlike MacCrone and la Grange, who confine their deliberations to the basic and applied science respectively, Pratt-Yule focuses her attention on the "dichotomy" itself, lamenting the harm it has done "in Britain where clinically oriented and experimentally minded research workers are separated by an abyss of prejudice" (1953, p. 4). Trained as a psychoanalyst but interested in animal experiments (Böhmke & Tlali, 2008), she concedes "at the outset that both the clinical and the experimental approaches have their aberrations" (Pratt-Yule, 1953, p. 4). Expressing concern about "the type of article too frequently found in the psycho-analytic reviews", she rebukes simultaneously the scientific approach for its "worship of measurement for its own sake, a tendency to juggle with statistics, a free use of pseudo-mathematical symbols" (ibid.). She implies, also, that the clinical approach is of greater real-world significance, as "[v]ery often the results of precise and carefully designed experiments appear to have little relevance to

significant and urgent problems of behaviour” (ibid.). Pratt-Yule then sets herself the task of “bridg[ing] the gap between the two approaches and consider[ing] what contribution each may properly make to the scientific study of behaviour” (ibid.). But since the “achievements... of experimental psychology are obvious... it is the clinical approach which requires clarification, evaluation and defence” (ibid.).

Pratt-Yule’s position is inconsistent: she finds fault with both traditions, but states that only one is in need of “defence.” According to her protégé,⁹² Ronald Albino, Pratt-Yule had played an instrumental role in the founding of SAPA:

Now also in that time the South African Psychological Association was founded. I was present on the very morning that it began when Prof Pratt-Yule said to me: ‘I think there are enough psychologists in South Africa to have a psychological association,’ which she then proceeded to form. She wrote a letter to Prof MacCrone at Wits making this proposal, [I] can’t remember the year.... He wrote back and said, ‘Fine,’ and immediately... the first [congress] was [held] in Bloemfontein. I don’t know how many were there, [it] must have been about twenty people at the most – that was our first conference.... That meeting was very interesting in that it exhibited this conflict... between behaviourism and the non-behaviouristic psychologies. There was a man at Wits – American – he got up and told us in very vigorous terms that... behaviourism was what psychology was all about. That immediately produced an uproar and for the rest of the three days it was a battle.’⁹³

From its humble beginnings, SAPA was split not only along the pure/applied divide, but also – and more or less correspondingly – between behaviorists and non-behaviorists. Pratt-Yule was a compromise figure in both controversies, having interests in psychoanalysis and animal experimentation while excelling as teacher⁹⁴ and practitioner.⁹⁵ Albino recalls how, because of the limited number of psychology staff at the University of Natal, “we did everything: we taught fundamental psychology, applied psychology, we did service work – everything that came to hand – which I think made us all quite good general psychologists.”⁹⁶ Pratt-Yule was uniquely positioned to appeal to all constituencies: by placing the burden of proof squarely on the clinical approach, she endears herself to experimentalists; on the other hand, by taking it upon herself – a psychoanalyst – to present the clinical case, she is assured the approval of non-experimentalists.

⁹² Jack Mann’s description of Albino. Mann interview, May 14, 1982, p. 13.

⁹³ Ronald Albino interview, April 7, 1982, p. 3.

⁹⁴ Mann interview, ibid., p. 15. When asked to think of “great names in South African psychology” (p. 14), Mann answered: “I think on the purely academic scene Pratt-Yule had an enormous influence on the teaching. It was interesting that after the Second World War there was a time that nearly all the top posts at the English universities in psychology were held by people that had been trained by her and they seemed to naturally go into academic psychology” (p. 15).

⁹⁵ Albino interview, ibid., p. 2.

⁹⁶ ibid.

While Pratt-Yule suggests that her point of departure is experimentalist, this amounts to little more than a rhetorical attempt to set experimentalists at ease. Midway through her address, she returns once again to the shortcomings of the scientific method:

Every day research workers in the field of personality get new reminders that restricted test situations are restricted in their effects; they do not „excite‘ the subjects adequately. If people are placed in non-significant situations and set trivial tasks, trivial and non-significant responses are elicited, and conclusions based on these have little predictive value for real behaviour. The more complex, the more involved in total character structure, the more significant the variables we wish to estimate, the more useless the laboratory and test situation. Examples are legion. (1953, p. 6)

Pratt-Yule proves unable to further the claims of clinicians without circumscribing those of experimentalists – one would expect nothing less in a “dichotomy.” Yet she admires the work of Lorenz and Tinbergen because, “[i]f they have shown us the value of the clinical eye, they have never questioned the value of the experimental eye” (p. 7). It is this approach that allows her to resolve the impasse:

We like the outlook of a certain professor who has portraits of Freud and Pavlov on opposite walls of his study and declares that his aim as a psychologist is to move those portraits round till they hang side by side on the middle wall! (ibid.)

Pratt-Yule asserts that much psychological research entails in any case “the proper blending of both approaches... despite the theoretical controversy between the die-hards of both camps” (ibid.). Confronted with urgent real-world problems, psychologists have been forced into a methodological pragmatism, “developing new techniques *ad hoc*, ignoring methodology, and drawing heavily on „hunches‘. For such as these, theoretical dichotomies have not existed” (p. 8). Pratt-Yule concludes her address with the observation that

[h]ere in South Africa we are fond of stressing the immense complexity of the problems which face us as a multi-racial society. If we, as psychologists, are to play our proper constructive role in their solution, we cannot afford to spend much time on theoretical controversy, however much intellectual fun and stimulus we may undoubtedly derive from it. The problems which face us are indeed urgent, and it behoves us to be both liberal-minded and pragmatic in our approach to them. (p. 9)

By the end of her speech, Pratt-Yule comes down decisively on the side of the clinical approach. She talks up the potential of “intuition... as a potent source of testable hypotheses” in the course of a lengthy discussion on “how the clinical approach may enrich the experimental” (ibid.). By contrast, her account of the benefits of the experimental approach is considerably less substantial as she reproaches “militant experimentalist[s]” for their “basic insecurity” (ibid.). The ongoing theoretical controversy is, for the most part, the fault of experimentalists, the continuation of which will curtail the discipline’s efforts to solve the country’s problems. Still, Pratt-Yule maintains the importance of being “both liberal-minded

and pragmatic” (ibid.) – a significant choice of adjectives given the opposing constituencies they call forth. What is implied is that, whereas English science provides objectivity and Afrikaner practice affords „social relevance’, neither can do without the other. Pratt-Yule is identifying and attempting to heal a fracture in South African psychology that, less than a decade later, will break entirely.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1954 (S. BIESHEUVEL)

Since he is the first personnel psychologist to lead the association, Simon Biesheuvel believes that his choice of topic – *The Relationship between Psychology and Occupational Science* – is justified.⁹⁷ He admits the possible tedium the field may induce in clinicians and theoreticians – shades of Pratt-Yule’s „dichotomy’ – but claims to “make no apology for discussing it on this occasion” (1954, p. 129). Biesheuvel links productivity to economic prosperity and reasons that psychologists should involve themselves in the question of labor efficiency – “[i]f for no other reason than that their own way of life is directly and vitally involved” (ibid.).

Despite his claim to the contrary, Biesheuvel’s tone is preponderantly apologetic. He appeals to his *ethos* (the presidential prerogative) as well as the *pathos* (sympathy) and *logos* (reasonableness) of the audience, creating an impression of one uncertain of his place in the discipline. While he acknowledges the field’s “disreputable origins” (p. 130), he hails its improved sensitivity to workers’ needs. He accepts, further, that occupational psychology’s subject matter can appear, at times, to be unpsychological and, on other occasions, to transcend psychology. Biesheuvel ends up suspecting that

[o]ur analysis [is] leading us to the absurd conclusion that in order to carry out his job properly the occupational psychologist must become a kind of scientific ‚superman’ required to conquer a universe of sciences within the time of an ordinary professional training course. In this predicament, he could either choose to become a scientific dilettante, knowing the headlines but none of the content, or accept the advice given by Hamlet to his mother concerning her heart, to ‚throw away the worser part of it, and live the purer with the other half.’ (p. 134)

Whereas Pratt-Yule resolves her „dichotomy’ by asserting the mutual dependence of basic and applied psychology, Biesheuvel sees an impossible “dilemma” (ibid.). He escapes it by explaining the process by which a pure science is able to generate a “technology” – or “practical art” – such as occupational science (ibid.). Just as medical doctors and engineers are not required to master each of their respective ancillary sciences – “[o]f necessity the treatment must often be synoptic, but never to the point of inculcating headlines only” (p.

⁹⁷ At the time of his address, Biesheuvel was also the director of the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR).

135) – the same holds true for occupational scientists. A host of sciences have contributed unevenly to the emergence of occupational science and so deserve differing degrees of devotion: “mothered” by occupational psychology with mathematical statistics in “the role of father”, physiology and sociology are its “godparents” while education, physics, economics and the rest of the multidisciplinary family function “as aunts and uncles” (p. 136).

Biesheuvel’s standing in South African psychology is a matter of controversy (Painter & van Ommen, 2008; van Ommen, 2008). Described conflictingly as a “liberal-inclined psychologist and critic of race bias in intelligence testing” (Dubow, 2006, p. 253) but elsewhere as a “public apologist” for the exploitation of black labor (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat, & Statman, 1990, p. 10), Biesheuvel’s detractors will argue that his speech says nothing of the fact that the NIPR’s special interest in African educability was born not of intellectual curiosity but of funder-driven obligations “to generate knowledge [that would] promote efficiency of the workforce and curtail industrial action by workers” (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008, p. 80). Others take the benign view that the NIPR’s studies on personnel management corresponded to a massive expansion in South Africa’s industrial capability, which resulted in skills shortages and an associated need for vocational and aptitude testing (Dubow, 1995). For the former group, NIPR research exemplifies the kind of liberalism typical of WESSA „bastards’: “rapacious, exploitative imperialists cunningly masking their racist, reactionary attitudes and conduct beneath a veneer of apolitical neutrality” (Foley, 1991, p. 15; see also Terre Blanche & Seedat, 2001), while, for the latter, such research “involved an element of social meliorism” (Dubow, 1995, p. 237).

Biesheuvel’s location on the basic-applied continuum is also unclear. According to one commentator, his bearing towards theoretical considerations in psychology was habitually dismissive (Dubow, 1995) – yet his speech does not come across as anti-scientific in the least. Biesheuvel makes the case, for example, that regardless of whether trainees are interested in human relations, personnel techniques or ergonomics, mathematics and statistics are “essential for all” (1954, p. 139). In his later years, moreover, he seemed especially taken by the notion of scientific disinterestedness (Biesheuvel, 1987, 1991). Gordon Nelson, a former NIPR director himself, remarks that Biesheuvel’s career had “a profound effect on the [post-war] development of applied psychology *and* basic psychological research in South Africa” (1991, p. 571, added emphasis).

Adopting a different strategy to Pratt-Yule, Biesheuvel seems almost to position himself *beyond* the “dilemma.” Indeed, when reminiscing a quarter-of-a-century later about

the early SAPA congresses, he would recall how “[u]nfortunately a perennial debate between behaviourists and psychoanalysts developed, which I found rather sterile and partisan” (1979, p. 6). Although he was “irritated by irrelevancies and anything that he construed as a waste of time” (G. Nelson, 1991, p. 572), as an applied scientist he also cautioned against the pursuit of the “perfect product [because] one would have to spend one’s whole life on it, and in the end it would probably be irrelevant” (ibid., p. 571). In short, ‘relevance’ was irrelevant. Unlike Pratt-Yule, Biesheuvel considered applied psychology to be as susceptible to ‘irrelevance’ as the pure science itself. This explains not only the circumspection of his own conceptual analysis of ‘relevance’ (Biesheuvel, 1991) but also clarifies why, despite wanting to put occupational science ‘on the map’, he makes virtually no effort to extol its real-world virtues. Rather, in the introduction to his address, Biesheuvel chooses to distinguish himself from “those who require their subject matter spiced with the more colorful and imaginative aspects of personality study” as well as those desirous of “opportunities for the formulation of theoretical ingenuities, so amply provided by behaviour studies” (1954, p. 129). But this reluctance to position himself within either the basic/behaviorist or applied/non-behaviorist traditions meant not only that he would not offend anyone in the audience – after all, his noncommittalism was a rhetorical strategy designed to win occupational science a seat at psychology’s table – it also meant that more than three decades later it would prove impossible to fix his location on the political spectrum.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1955 (A.B. VAN DER MERWE)

After obtaining a master’s degree in psychology in 1938 from Stellenbosch University, A.B. van der Merwe went on to qualify as a medical doctor at the University of Cape Town. In 1945, he returned to his *alma mater* to teach clinical psychology, earning a doctorate in 1949 for his exploration of *Peripheral Vasomotor Reactions as an Index of Emotional Tension and Emotional Stability*. By 1955, van der Merwe was SAPA president: titled *Tension and Psychosomatic Reactions*,⁹⁸ his address was an abbreviated form of his doctoral thesis and consisted of a two-page foray into physiological psychology.

In comparison to those of his predecessors, van der Merwe’s address is arguably the least controversial. It resembles in content most APA speeches in which “presidents... summarize their own substantive contributions or... describe recent developments in a particular subarea of psychology” (Fowler, 1990, p. 1). Just as la Grange had done in 1950, van der Merwe steers clear both of Afrikaner ideology – unusual for a Broederbond

⁹⁸ The address was delivered in Afrikaans.

(Wilkins & Strydom, 1978) – and of wading into the „battle of the schools’ that troubled in varying measures such Anglophone psychologists as MacCrone, Pratt-Yule and Biesheuvel. Then again, as regards the interpretation of psychosomatic disturbance, he does mention in passing how “[o]n the one side there is the school that wants to see a deep-seated symbolic meaning in every functional symptom” (van der Merwe, 1955, p. 4). He ends his address enigmatically too, concluding that

[t]he concepts of basic tension and lability help us to view certain reactions of the normal person, the neurotic as well as the psychotic from a new vantage-point, and necessarily direct our attention to psychotherapy of a different nature. (ibid.)

Until as recently as the new millennium, psychology at Stellenbosch University cared little for psychoanalysis. Yet van der Merwe’s comments about the field do not constitute evidence of an underlying behaviorist antipathy.⁹⁹ He noted for himself how young Stellenbosch psychologists of the late forties and early fifties “were obsessed with the idea... of giving the theoretical subject a practical orientation” (van der Merwe, 1984, p. 1 quoted in Scholtz, 2002, p. 10). But this was not to be accomplished through inter-school one-upmanship or, for that matter, Christian-National rhetoric about serving the *volk*. Similar to NP strategy, the first half of the 1950s was to be years of consolidation rather than antagonization in the discipline. Psychologists throughout the country were beginning to open private practices (J. O’Meara, n.d.); SAPA, for its part, was in the process of developing an ethical code of conduct – it was passed at the 1955 AGM – and had been negotiating since 1951 with the Minister of Health and the South African Medical and Dental Council regarding the registration of psychologists (J. Louw, 1997). Professional interests encouraged SAPA in-group solidarity “against a pretty tough and exclusive [medical] trade union” (J. O’Meara, n.d., p. 15).

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1958 (A.B. VAN DER MERWE)

At the 1958 congress, A.B. van der Merwe was into his second term as SAPA president. He starts his address by thanking the audience for the confidence it has placed in him by electing him president.¹⁰⁰ He then pays tribute to la Grange and Biesheuvel for their leadership at a time “when the air was but rather thin” and “feelings of insecurity, and inferiority, were busy overcoming many of us” (van der Merwe, 1958, p. 2). He compares both predecessors to the prophet Elijah, who, lifted into the heavens on a chariot drawn by steeds of fire, drops his

⁹⁹ In those years, the psychology department at Stellenbosch was “eclectic in nature” (Scholtz, 2002, p. 10).

¹⁰⁰ This address, like the 1955 one, was delivered in Afrikaans.

mantle, which is then gathered up by his successor, Elisha. Humbled by the occasion, van der Merwe “in this case cannot help but wonder if Elijah’s mantle has descended on the true Elisha” (ibid.). Under the successive stewardships of la Grange – “the father of our association” – and Biesheuvel – who “with his thorough, scientific aggression inspired us to independent conduct” (ibid.) – SAPA has emerged from “its infant years” and “youthful uncertainty” to “where we stand today” (ibid.).

Van der Merwe proceeds to remind his listeners of the association’s founding sentiment: “a need for professional psychological services in this country, a gap the community feels increasingly with each passing day” (ibid.). Accordingly, his address pays homage to the role of the clinical psychologist in the community, firstly, in respect of “the positive promotion of mental health” (p. 3) and, secondly, in encouraging the rehabilitation of patients that otherwise would spend their lives in institutions. He details the shortage of psychiatric facilities and trained personnel in the face of massive public demand, criticizing the fact that, while only two hundred beds exist in the country for the treatment of patients with serious neurotic illnesses, there are ten state institutions for a much smaller population of psychotic patients. In addition, national mental health organizations and education departments are hamstrung by a crippling shortage of trained clinical psychologists. For van der Merwe, the remedy is two-fold: a focus on preventative work and the creation of “a more effective psychotherapy” (p. 4). By the latter he means an “active psychotherapy” (p. 5) that is offered in outpatient settings, is multidisciplinary in scope and involves a “thoroughly elaborated readjustment program for each patient” (ibid.). Citing British, Dutch and American examples of community-based mental health services, van der Merwe predicts the end of custodial care, an eventuality owing much to the maturation of modern psychopathology over the previous fifty years and the development of tranquilizer drugs. Moreover, because no single science can assume responsibility for the mental health of a community, the clinical psychologist plays a vital role in the multidisciplinary team, failing which “he will commit an unforgiveable sin against humankind” (p. 6).

In comparison with his 1955 address, van der Merwe’s change of tone is conspicuous: whereas his earlier speech is chiefly of a forensic kind, the 1958 address is in turns epideictic and deliberative. The difference is that, in the course of the intervening years, the effects of two important developments have begun to permeate the discipline. First, in December 1955 the profession attained statutory recognition as an auxiliary medical service (J. Louw, 1997). The achievement of this milestone along with, second, the formal adoption of an ethical code

at that year's AGM, afforded psychologists the much-desired legitimacy of *bona fide* professionals. This is why van der Merwe can „biblicalize' the occasion, declaring triumphantly that the discipline has moved beyond its “periods of youthful uncertainty”, with psychologists now operating alongside psychiatrists, general practitioners and social workers (1958, p. 2). With the requisite ethical and legal credentials, he is in a stronger position than any of the earlier presidents to affirm the necessity of psychological services while warning off “the ignoramus [who] is busy gambling with the mental health of his patient” (p. 4). Unlike MacCrone, Pratt-Yule and Biesheuvel who apply themselves to intra-disciplinary controversies, van der Merwe can extend the discipline's horizon of ambition by exhorting his fellow professionals to dedicate themselves to the mental health of all. But like la Grange (1950), he manages to draw on the unifying ideal of public service without ever having recourse to Afrikaner nationalist discourse.

PRESIDENTIAL / OPENING ADDRESS, 1961 (A.B. VAN DER MERWE)

By 1961, events had gone pear-shaped. Since the Naidoo debacle of 1956, the „race' question had been simmering in the background. Delegates arrived at the Stellenbosch congress in the knowledge that, this time around, there would be no postponement of a matter on which there were fierce differences of opinion. In the absence of the university's rector, A.J. la Grange calls on van der Merwe – once again president – to deliver the opening address.¹⁰¹ To general laughter, van der Merwe complains that the venue is lacking in homeliness, before adding that “[y]ou will however not get too cold or warm as we regulate the temperature automatically according to the heatedness of the discussions taking place” (1961, p. 229). His mood darkening, he then gives the lie to his 1958 celebration of SAPA's coming-of-age:

Ladies and gentlemen, the Psychological Association is now in its thirteenth year – from a genetic point of view it can thus be considered in the stage of puberty – and we must perhaps expect some or other growth pain and passing fancy. I just hope that, as true professional psychotherapists, we shall be very sober-minded when considering and dealing with these whims. (ibid.)

Van der Merwe stops short of outing the „race' question directly. He attempts, instead, to normalize the controversy as a foreseeable growth pain, cautioning the audience against overreaction. Three years earlier, he had waxed lyrical about the “independent conduct” of the association and its successful negotiation of “youthful uncertainty” – now, he returns SAPA to the adolescent gawkinsness it was supposed to have resolved. In contrast to his earlier speeches, he also takes the trouble to address the delegates partly in English, quoting for good

¹⁰¹ On this occasion, van der Merwe takes turns to speak in Afrikaans and English.

measure the national poet of Scotland. With this ethical appeal (*ethos*), van der Merwe attempts to ingratiate himself as a benevolent and even-handed leader (Corbett & Connors, 1999). He recognizes the importance of finding common ground with English-speaking psychologists, since it was more or less understood that the English-medium universities entertained liberal views on the „race’ issue. And then, having already made reference in Afrikaans to the temperature in the venue, he informs his English colleagues of the expected weather outside:

Our branch secretary, Mr. Botha, guarantees fine weather. If we do get a few occasional showers, please remember the immortal words of Robert Burns: „The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft agley.’ (ibid.)

In quoting Burns, was van der Merwe making a veiled threat against the English contingent that had come to Stellenbosch in droves to outvote any proposal for racial segregation (Nell, 1993)? It is impossible to tell. As surely as la Grange did not anticipate the incipient drama,¹⁰² van der Merwe could not have foreseen what was to happen either – that the coming days would alter irrevocably the future of South African psychology. Notwithstanding the tense debates between Freudians and behaviorists, English-Afrikaner relations during the early SAPA conferences had at least been collegial. But in the years following the 1961 congress, which witnessed the establishment of the whites-only PIRSA, “a lot of damage was done”¹⁰³ between the two associations – and South African psychology’s international profile suffered accordingly.¹⁰⁴

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter concluded with the observation that la Grange (1962) and Schlebusch (1963) ended up articulating opposing discourses in the wake of the SAPA-PIRSA split. The present chapter was introduced, therefore, as an attempt to reveal the *order of discourse* within South African psychology that preceded the rupture. A general observation is that the addresses of the 1950s provide almost no discursive indication that a break was on the cards. To be sure, references were made to the tensions that existed between the basic/behaviorist and applied/non-behaviorist camps, which corresponded roughly to an English-Afrikaner divide. But at no point during the course of the decade did addresses ever turn overtly political. It is as if English- and Afrikaans-speaking psychologists had decided unconsciously

¹⁰² According to Dreyer Kruger, la Grange had not prepared himself for the possibility that the Afrikaner psychologists might lose the vote on the ‘race’ question (Kruger interview, April 15, 1982, p. 2).

¹⁰³ Ronald Albino interview, April 7, 1982, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Biesheuvel interview, May 14, 1982, pp. 20-21.

on a moratorium and colluded to visit their „displaced’ hostilities on an unsuspecting pure-applied antinomy.

Both Afrikaner presidents of the decade – la Grange (1950) and van der Merwe (1958) – articulate a *professionalist* discourse of public service. They speak variously of the imperative to protect a „shamelessly exploited’ public, a service „gap the community feels with each passing day’ and „an unforgiveable sin against humankind’ should psychologists fail to assume their places on multidisciplinary teams. For their part, the English-speaking psychologists advance a discourse of *disciplinarity* that leaves them preoccupied with a „battle of the schools’ (MacCrone, 1951), a „dichotomy’ between the clinical and the experimental (Pratt-Yule, 1953) and a „dilemma’ between pure and applied psychology (Biesheuvel, 1954). Troubled by these „fundamental issues’, they seek „perspective’ and „liberal-minded pragmatism’.

The discursive order of the 1950s includes elements of the la Grange–Schlebusch constellation of 1962. A notable difference, however, is that the Afrikaner professionalist discourse lacks the accouterments of its *volksdiens* counterpart, which reflects the general downplaying of Christian-Nationalism in political circles of the 1950s. In order to set in motion the apartheid project, the NP needed to expand its political base: there was little likelihood of an Afrikaner republic with a five-seat parliamentary majority when the UP had won the popular vote by some margin. Moreover, because Malan and Strijdom “were determined to keep the nationalist policy agenda firmly in the party’s hands”, the Broederbond – the custodians of Christian-Nationalism – ended up being sidelined for much of the 1950s (D. O’Meara, 1996, p. 47). So, too, in the discipline, the apparent absence of ideology among Afrikaner psychologists mirrored the goings-on among their political masters, while there was also the practical matter of professional registration that required cooperating with their Anglophone colleagues.

Among English-speaking psychologists, the distinction between the discourses of disciplinarity and liberal individualism is a matter of degree since they both draw – unequally, it should be noted – on a culture of retreatism. The former is concerned with the scope and structure of the discipline and is broadly – yet not exclusively, as Pratt-Yule’s address illustrates – uninterested in matters beyond the discipline. Its general advocacy of circumspection, „perspective’ and „liberal-minded pragmatism’ is characteristic of “liberals in the post-1948 era [whose] insistence on reason and moderation was, perhaps, a comfortable and comforting position to adopt – because it allowed those in the beleaguered middle ground

to cast their opponents as extremists” (Dubow, 2001, p. 116). But with the resurgence of Christian-Nationalism in the new republic and the subsequent secession of Afrikaner psychologists now confident of their mission, this posture hardened into Schlebusch’s liberal-individualist ethic that was inimical to social formations of any kind. Meanwhile, Strümpfer’s (1993) claim that the call for „relevance’ began at English universities during the late 1970s no longer convinces. With a thoroughgoing focus on public service, Afrikaner psychology of the 1950s had been concerned with „social relevance’ all along. In the 1960s, however, this would transmute into an appeal for „ethnic-national relevance’ directed specifically at Afrikaners.

CHAPTER 8: PIRSA ADDRESSES (1963–1977)

Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country's many human problems are taken into account. (P.M. Robbertse – PIRSA president, 1969)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter analyzes PIRSA addresses of the 1960s and 1970s. It observes how, during the sixties, a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service) emerged, calling for 'ethnic-national relevance' in the discipline. With the *volk* facing such menaces as communism, capitalism and egalitarianism, psychological research needed to dedicate itself to addressing these and other threats. In the seventies, however, appeals for 'ethnic-national relevance' became less prominent with discussions of South African issues disappearing from the agenda. Instead, the centerpiece of 'ethnic-national relevance' – *volksdiens* itself – came under attack. The unraveling of PIRSA's quest for 'ethnic-national relevance' reflected the disintegration of apartheid rationality from the mid-sixties onwards, which resulted from a concatenation of economic, cultural and political upheavals.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1963 (A.J. LA GRANGE)

In his 1962 inaugural address, A.J. la Grange ranked the phenomenon of traffic accidents second on his list of "problems that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (1962, p. 17). This may explain why, by the time of his 1963 speech, he had left Stellenbosch University to head up the SARSC's Division for the Planning and Coordination of Road Safety Research. But despite the urgency with which he viewed the road safety question, at the 1963 congress la Grange chose to speak on a topic that had featured last on his 1962 list – hence the title of his speech, *Background and Perspective on the Latter-day Interest in the Gifted Child* (la Grange, 1964).¹⁰⁵

Revisiting the history of education, la Grange criticizes the egalitarianism of revolutionary France and, later, "[t]he unrealistic post-war socialistic-inspired policy of provision of primary education for all [in the belief that] it should be a universal human right" (ibid., p. 3). He adds that

[t]his tendency could be observed most clearly in Britain during the rule of the Labour government... [when] there was an unmistakable swing away from monetary investment in the education of gifted children in favor of the appropriation of more generous teaching amenities for the masses. (ibid.)

¹⁰⁵ In this chapter, all titles and excerpts have been translated from the original Afrikaans.

La Grange notes, however, that whereas “Russia has nevertheless been acutely aware of how to nurture the development of her gifted” (ibid.), she has done so only to actualize “[t]he communist striving for world domination” (p. 5). By contrast, he castigates the United States for an utilitarian outlook vis-à-vis giftedness, which he traces to “[t]he capitalistic-democratic striving for self-assertion by means of the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the directors of private and state-supported enterprises in all areas of life” (ibid.). La Grange also takes issue with what he locates “[b]etween the titanic power struggles of communism on the one side and capitalism on the other side” (p. 7), namely, “[t]he liberalistic-socialistic striving for the obliteration of all class differences and the equalization of all people regardless of race, nationality or individual differences of whatever kind whatsoever” (p. 5).

La Grange cautions against “a one-sided development of giftedness” (p. 6) in the direction of scientific and technological achievement:

The development of giftedness in a certain direction without taking into account the social structure within which that giftedness must be applied, would not only be meaningless but, if the healthy balance is disturbed, can lead to the spiritual and material decline of the community in question. (ibid.)

Quoting Abraham Tannenbaum, he asserts that “[a]ny definition of talent must have a social reference” (p. 11) – which in the South African instance is “separate development for the different racial groups that make up the population” (ibid.). However, despite the fact that these different groups are “considered potentially equal in all respects” (ibid.), it remains the case that, “because of the existing differences in level of civilization and education, culture and traditions, there are basic differences in the valuation of different forms of giftedness within the different communities” (ibid.). Moreover, since the white community exists

in a relationship of guardianship over the non-white communities... it is self-evident that among other things great value be attached to the discovery and development of talents among whites that can be applied also to the needs of the non-white communities in numerous areas, especially in those of educational, social and medical services. In so far as the non-white communities succeed in discovering and developing their own talents in all areas under the leadership of whites, they will eventually be capable of providing for their own needs in all respects. (ibid.)

La Grange reasons that, since the level of civilization is directly proportional to the number of careers available in a given community, and, because it is “the basic task of the white community... to lead the non-whites gradually to the highest rung of civilization and full independence” (ibid.), “... the non-whites – with the growing differentiation and increase in

the number of careers – will require special help directing the multiple talents of their own children in the desired directions according to the special needs of their community” (ibid.).

La Grange recommends that the education system commit itself to the fulfillment of two goals. First, white South Africa’s “rich heritage of the past [must] be transmitted faithfully to posterity, and its principles made known to the non-white communities in the country” (p. 12). Second, “provision [must] be made... for highly-skilled manpower in all areas of national existence” (ibid.). The preservation of this heritage – “with its predominantly Christian and Nationalist life- and worldview” (ibid.) – indicates that “we are not willing to sacrifice our highest spiritual values for material gain” (ibid.), while the question of skilled labor means “that we shall also not countenance our material decline by allowing, through neglect of our gifted [people], that we fall behind the rest of the Western world in scientific and technological areas” (ibid.). La Grange then mentions by name several Afrikaner psychologists and students that have contributed actively to the study of giftedness, before concluding with a list of additional research questions “for which the help of psychologists is indispensable” (p. 13).

At first glance, the bearing of giftedness on ‘our continued national existence’ may seem melodramatic – but by the end of his address la Grange has provided a compelling argument. At a rhetorical level, an outward appeal to reason (*logos*) is buttressed with an emotional appeal (*pathos*): *ad populum* arguments preponderate in which terms such as ‘socialism’ and ‘the masses’ are used pejoratively, creating a neurotic climate that facilitates the conversion of assertions into facts (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 70). At a discursive level, la Grange develops the prodromal *volksdiens* discourse of the previous year’s address. The apartheid state’s *raison d’être* depends on the ‘ethnic-national relevance’ of psychological research: without the study of giftedness, the black community will not attain the heights of white civilization, while the ensuing failure of white trusteeship – *voogdyskap* (1963, p. 11) – amounts to a breach of Christian-National morality.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1964 (P.M. ROBBERTSE)

In 1964, the new president, P.M. Robbertse, delivered a talk entitled *Creative Thoughts or Abilities*. Just as la Grange had spoken of the ‘indispensable contributions’ that psychologists could bring to the question of giftedness, his successor now claimed – regarding the broader matter of human potentiality – that “psychology has a meaningful contribution to make” (Robbertse, 1964, p. 1). Robbertse echoes his predecessor in several places besides, noting in his introductory comments the underdevelopment of the social sciences and humanities in

comparison with the natural sciences, “the shortage of highly-trained manpower” and the necessity of applying “the Republic’s human potential in the most effective manner” (ibid.). Robbertse, that is, frames his speech intertextually as an extension of la Grange’s – he references explicitly the latter’s 1963 address – adding that “the objective in this address is to shed light on a particular form of giftedness namely creative thoughts or abilities” (ibid.). Reviewing several authoritative American sources – he apologizes for reinforcing this focus on the “new American illness” (p. 8) – Robbertse considers at length the nature and measurement of creative thoughts and abilities. He concludes that neither question is settled and that “[t]he matter of creative thoughts is recommended eagerly to PIRSA members for [further] research” (p. 9). Despite an implicit endorsement of la Grange’s *volksdiens* discourse, Robbertse’s 1964 address is a far cry from his addresses later in the decade – which went a long way to cementing his reputation as arguably PIRSA’s most outspoken ideologue.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1965 (A.J. LA GRANGE)

At the 1965 congress, la Grange returns as president. He revisits his maiden address at the 1962 congress – it is now PIRSA’s manifesto – and quotes in full his list of six “questions that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence” (la Grange, 1966, p. 1). Expressing his appreciation at the progress being made on the last of these questions – giftedness – he doffs his hat at PIRSA members working in the area and, in particular, at Robbertse, then director of the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research.¹⁰⁶ La Grange goes on to observe that, while previous congresses have not focused on any of the other five questions, “noticeable progress has indeed been made in the area of road safety research, and it is appropriate on this occasion that mention be made of it” (p. 2). Here, unlike in his 1963 address, he speaks directly to his own research specialty, titling his address *Recent Contributions of Psychologists (with Special Reference to PIRSA Members) in Respect of Urgent Problems in the Area of Road Safety Research and the Prevention of Road Accidents*.

La Grange deals mainly with the legal, technical and psychological factors that affect the incidence of motor vehicle accidents on South African roads. He advocates the importance of road safety education – *padveiligheidsopvoeding* – which

¹⁰⁶ The Bureau was established in 1929 as a research division by the then South African Union’s Department of Education. It was the central player in the developing relationship between social science research and state policy. The Bureau was incorporated into the Human Sciences Research Council in 1969 (Fleisch, 1995).

must serve as a prophylactic agent against the development of accident proneness, that is, it must strengthen positive characteristics in the character and personality that can serve as resistance against the operation of both detrimental environmental factors as well as social and emotional maladjustments that can strengthen the tendency to become involved in accidents. (p. 10)

He then describes a number of road safety projects being conducted around the country at mainly Afrikaans-medium departments of psychology – Pretoria University, Potchefstroom University, the University of the Orange Free State and the University of South Africa (pp. 10-11).

But despite demonstrable interest in the road safety question, la Grange warns that,

[w]hen the need for psychological help [as regards road safety] becomes acute, the following questions among others will be posed: Where are the psychological organizations that can deliver this service? To what extent are the existing departments of psychology at our different universities equipped and competent to deliver this service? (p. 14)

Apart from recommending the “creation of additional facilities for the psychological investigation of traffic offenders” (ibid.), la Grange encourages university authorities to show greater interest in national road safety education (*volksopvoeding*). The modern-day university, he opines, is a “people’s university” (p. 15), the result of centuries-long democratizing processes that eventually succeeded in wresting control of the university from the Church. Quoting from H.B. Thom’s address at the official opening of the 1965 academic year at Stellenbosch University, la Grange stresses that universities “have become a mirror of society... [and] provide leadership to the community through which they are nourished in the first instance, and also leadership to the whole country” (ibid.). Given that road accidents are “the curse of contemporary society... as regards the prevention of road accidents the honor belongs to [the universities] as the trailblazers” (pp. 15-16).

At the core of this university-driven road safety program is “the development of a social value system in which road safety must be included and placed on a high rung in the hierarchy of values” (p. 16). This value system originates in the community

but for its success is dependent on the leadership provided by leading institutions such as universities that are accepted by the people [volk] as their possession. Here we see a golden opportunity for the university branches of PIRSA to take the lead. Psychologists can make valuable contributions to the planning and introduction of a comprehensive program of national education in which road safety education is integrated as an inseparable ingredient. The major motivations in this regard will have to be sought in the appeal to national self-respect and national pride that must form the foundation for a code of road behavior of the highest quality. (ibid.)

La Grange then asks how a high level of

national self-respect and national pride can ever be attained, given the multiracial composition of our population? The answer to this question will only be discovered when the

different universities for the different racial groups in our country... all become true people's universities and each with its own service orientation [diensmotief] that arises from its own ethnic solidarity [volksgebondenheid]. (pp. 16-17)

He concludes that

it is above all my inner wish that [PIRSA members] will not be found wanting when, in relation to questions of national scope, an appeal for help and leadership is made to them. Only on the basis of a strong orientation of service to country and people [volk], including service to fellow citizens within the different national associations of different racial groups, is our survival [voortbestaan] justified and our future assured. (p. 18)

It is unclear if, in his closing sentence, la Grange has in mind the survival of PIRSA, Afrikanerdom or the white „race’ generally. In any event, the survivalist outlook of his 1962 address is still apparent: whether it is the future of his association, *volk* or „race’, the only way to guarantee „our survival’ is through „a strong orientation of service to country and volk.’ La Grange, therefore, remains committed to a *volksdiens* discourse: a psychology devoted to questions of „ethnic-national relevance’ is valorized to the point that research problems of limited consequence appear to have their social significance read into them. After all, it is with some difficulty that the prevention of road accidents or, for that matter, the cultivation of giftedness, can be considered matters of national urgency, the neglect of which will imperil „the foundations of our continued national existence’. La Grange, however, under the spell of an apocalyptic Afrikaner nationalist discourse, seems to view any given question through the prism of „ethnic-national relevance’.¹⁰⁷

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1966 (J.M. HATTINGH)

Delivering his presidential address on *Clinical Psychology, Professionalism and Own Identity*, Potchefstroom University’s J.M. Hattingh takes issue with the medical community’s opposition to the professional recognition of clinical psychology. He argues that, given the contributions of South African clinical psychologists in a variety of settings – educational and psychiatric in particular – public esteem for the profession is evident. Registration with the Medical Council as one of several „auxiliary services’ confers on the profession no more than “underling” status (1966, p. 5); the ideal of a clinical psychology with “a fully-fledged professional status with [its] own identity can only be obtained in [its] own association, with [its] own register and ethical code, under control of its own Psychological Council” (ibid.). For Hattingh, this is to be achieved partly through universities offering suitable training programs for students and partly through clinical psychologists “actively convincing the

¹⁰⁷ Talk of ‘social relevance’ – of which ‘ethnic-national relevance’ can be considered a subtype – is associated typically with fears of “imminent social catastrophe” (Sher & Long, 2012, p. 569).

public and the medical profession of their competence” (p. 7). In turn, the standing of clinical psychology depends on the profession’s effectiveness in ministrating to the needs of a help-seeking public – that is, its ‘social relevance’. Hattingh’s address is aligned more closely with the *professionalist* discourse common among Afrikaner psychologists in the 1950s than with PIRSA’s *volksdiens* discourse of the 1960s.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1967 (P.M. ROBBERTSE)

In his address – *Racial Differences and Psychology* – Robbertse criticizes “[t]he shift in opinions about natural [racial] differences [in the direction of racial] equality” (1967, p. 1). Drawing on Henry E. Garrett, he attributes the altered climate of opinion to the rise of modern anthropology,¹⁰⁸ the bad name the Nazis gave to racial theories, “[t]he striving of the African natives for freedom [that] roused strong sympathy in many whites” (ibid.), the Supreme Court ruling of 1954 that brought about the desegregation of American schools and, finally, the influence of communism. Robbertse agrees with Garrett that

egalitarianism is the scientific joke of the century [but] a dangerous joke [at that] in so far as it implicates other people’s survival. For these reasons it is deemed necessary to deal briefly with racial differences and the contribution that psychology has made and must still make. (p. 3)

Citing a host of American researchers and the work of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics, Robbertse decries UNESCO’s Statement on Race as “notorious” (p. 5). Just as la Grange did in 1962, he falls back on “the ground-breaking work” (p. 7) of John Carothers who likened the intellectual capacity of the African to that of the lobotomized European. Yet he insists that the PIRSA principle on “the unlikeness of races” should not be confused with a belief in “the superiority or inferiority of races” (p. 3).

Robbertse reminds his peers that PIRSA was founded on the conviction that the equality of races was a “false religion” (ibid.). All PIRSA members – he calls them “realists” – have a “solemn duty” to “destroy the faulty and dangerous image [*beeld*] that the egalitarians have created” (p. 4). He laments the fact that

some of the lecturers in psychology at our Afrikaans-language universities have become entangled in the nets of the racial equality philosophy... they have become its victims and... they are busy spiritually poisoning our students with it. Let us wake up before it is too late. (p. 10)

Robbertse – a Broederbond member himself (Wilkins & Strydom, 1978) – appeals to PIRSA members to “engage in research in the area on a greater scale because it involves the

¹⁰⁸ Robbertse adds that modern anthropology’s originator, Franz Boas, “a German Jew”, was also “a communist or had communistic affiliations” (p. 2).

scientific basis of separate development and it touches on the root of our survival” (Robbertse, 1967, p. 11).

Robbertse’s rhetoric is rich with religious imagery. In his rendering, PIRSA’s mission takes on Abrahamic proportions and involves nothing less than the destruction of a false idol: egalitarianism. Similar to la Grange, Robbertse’s main concern is with guaranteeing „our survival’ by proving through research of „ethnic-national relevance’ that „the scientific basis’ of apartheid policy is well-established. He, too, advances the discourse of *volksdiens* in which psychologists have a „solemn duty’ to protect the *volk* from „spiritual poisoning’. But unlike the professionalist discourse of the 1950s that concentrated largely on psychological *practice*, PIRSA’s presidents – with the exception of Hattingh – are concerned only with the „ethnic-national relevance’ of psychological *research*.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1968 (P.M. ROBBERTSE)

Continuing where he left off the previous year, Robbertse retains a focus on the perilousness of the modern life, influenced almost certainly by the worldwide turmoil of 1968. He begins his address – *A Modern View of the Human Being in Psychological Practice* – with the assertion that it is “the task... of the psychologist to reconsider and question the essence of schools of thought that deal with the origin, existence and destiny of man” (1968, p. 1). This is because of “the current unrest in human events on account of strike actions, protests and revolution, the misinterpretation and unholy violation of the moral codes of society on virtually all... fronts” (ibid.). He asks to what extent the “natural-scientification” (*vernatuurwetenskapliking*) of the discipline “has contributed to [the fact that] at present man’s religious-ethical mode of existence is deteriorating [*geknaag word*] at increasing pace” (ibid.). Following la Grange’s (1964) line of argument, Robbertse takes the view that technological progress “has robbed man of his soul” (1968, p. 2): now “a utility-being in the great machine of Robotism”, modern man “has become estranged from the cause of his existence, namely, God” (ibid.).

With the world in irreligious meltdown, the scene is set once more for socially conscious psychologists to intervene appropriately. Indeed, “as fellow guardians of national distinctiveness, we cannot but deliver a timely plea through our psychological work by attempting at least to make a contribution as a matter of support for a deranged humankind in a reeling [*kenterende*] world” (ibid.). Robbertse points the way by contending that humans are both spiritual and relational beings: he finds fault not only with the Freudian and behaviorist traditions but also with the dehumanizing manner in which psychologists

routinely interact with their respondents. Arguing for an “intersubjective method of approach in psychological practice” (p. 10), he contradicts any would-be objectivists on the grounds that “God the Creator... is the only complete Knower of each person and thereby the entire mankind” (ibid.). Like Schlebusch (1963) before him, Robbertse reacts negatively to social mobilization – but whereas the former opts for a liberal-individualist response, Robbertse adopts a service-oriented discourse of *benevolence* – distinct from Christian-National survivalism – whose concern is not with Afrikaners but with a „deranged humankind’.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1969 (P.M. ROBBERTSE)

Addressing himself to the topic, *Psychology and the Problem of Scientific Unity in Our Time*, Robbertse claims that it was Galileo’s work that facilitated the separation of the natural from the human sciences and, later on, additional specializations within the two camps. From the seventeenth century onwards, scientific practice shifted from being qualitatively person-oriented to being quantitatively materialist. Robbertse then observes, however, that recent developments in the natural sciences are leading to “the breaking-down of barriers” (1969, p. 5). Meanwhile, as in eastern Europe, “[i]t appears as if in Western countries the pendulum has started to swing back and the nations of the West are approaching a rediscovery of the human sciences” (p. 6). The importance of social, economic and cultural development programs can be seen in the growing communist influence around the world: “in the socialist countries the human sciences are considered as important as their physical arsenal” (p. 7).

Robbertse believes that “[p]sychology is in a favorable position [with respect to the unity of science question] because it extends so neatly over both of the cultures in question” (p. 5). Additionally, given the spread of communist ideology, he recommends that

the psychologist must ask himself what his duty is. Does the psychologist have a duty as regards the spread of ideologies that weaken his own worldview right down to the root so that his own survival is thereby threatened, or must he just follow an ostrich-politics and not notice the problem? (p. 7)

In fact, the psychologist must do more than merely notice the problem because

his spiritual assets will be threatened... he must also actually undertake research in the area [of communication studies]... The question can also be posed as to whether research in the field of psychology is providing the necessary contribution to the elaboration of our national affairs [volksuithouding] – or is it purely research for the sake of research? ... An analysis of the research projects that are currently underway in the field of psychology in South Africa does not leave a person without doubts. Too much thereof bears no relation to our national needs and the findings are often of such a nature that they have no meaning for anyone other than the researcher... Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country’s many human problems are taken into consideration. (pp. 7-8)

According to Robbertse, psychological research – by dint of orienting itself towards issues of national import – will curtail the reach of communist propaganda, contribute to the national life by addressing its manifold human problems, and eventually assist in the reunification of science by bringing the human sciences to a point where “they can assume their rightful place beside the natural sciences” (p. 8). As in most of his previous addresses, Robbertse’s rhetoric is symptomatic of the siege mentality that pervades Afrikaner nationalist discourse. Consistent with *volksdiens* discourse, he prescribes studies of ‘ethnic-national relevance’ for dutibound psychologists, in order to avoid the calamitous trajectory of ‘irrelevant’ research, namely, a communist takeover and a barrage of other social problems.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1970 (P.M. ROBBERTSE)

Robbertse begins his address – *Psychological Research and the Development of the Bantu Homelands* – by recalling his previous year’s plea, namely, that “psychological research in the Republic of South Africa must relate to our national needs” (1971, p. 2). In particular, he has in mind “an actual human problem that affects closely everyone in South Africa, regardless of color or political conviction... the reaction of the Bantu to the twentieth century Western world” (ibid.). Consequently, he regrets the fact that “publications about any aspect of the psychology of the Bantu are far scarcer than what they should be” and are restricted for the most part – as in the work of Biesheuvel – to the study of urban Bantus working in “White” areas (p. 4).

In terms of “research on psychological factors that play a role in *the development of the Bantu homelands*... what is the duty of psychology?” Robbertse asks (ibid., original emphases). He wonders whether “science can put itself in the service of the state” (ibid.), reasoning that “applied science, you will surely concede, primarily seeks after *methods for the attainment of policy goals*” (ibid., original emphasis). Besides, if Chris Barnard can find the justification to lengthen a person’s life by giving him another heart,¹⁰⁹ “isn’t there just as much, if not more, justification to find a scientific basis for the motivation of people to develop their underdeveloped homeland” (p. 5)? While accepting that a scientist may choose not to contribute to the realization of a certain policy goal, Robbertse maintains that, “if a policy goal for humanitarian reasons... appears desirable or even crucially necessary, who can condemn [the researcher] if he orients his research towards the realization of that goal” (ibid.)?

¹⁰⁹ Robbertse is referring to the first successful human heart transplant performed in 1967 by South African cardiac surgeon Chris Barnard.

For Robbertse, the question of the economic development of the Bantu homelands “must be seen especially as part of a process of acculturation induced to a large degree by Western culture” (ibid.). It is in the Bantu that certain characteristics – determinable through appropriate psychological research – “must be cultivated if he wants to function effectively in a predominantly Western capitalistic world” (p. 6). Moreover, psychological research into cultural factors that may influence the uptake of these characteristics is also indicated. Robbertse concludes with another question: “Are we, more particularly, directed adequately to the study of the Bantu in his hour of crisis, which is perhaps also our own hour of crisis” (p. 7)?

In calling for psychological research that will facilitate the cultural assimilation of the Bantu, Robbertse’s address heralds a softening of hard-boiled PIRSA dogma. Whereas in previous addresses capitalism was an object of sustained derision, it is presented here as an economic system that Bantus need to embrace. To be sure, Robbertse continues to objectify the Bantu in a manner consistent with the notion of white stewardship – but on this occasion, he makes comparatively little effort to address the Afrikaner subject directly. Drawing on a collection of third-person interrogatives, hypotheticals and nominalizations, the survivalism of bygone years – bar the closing paragraph – is entirely absent. In the publishing journal, even, one observes the oddity of a PIRSA presidential address being followed for the first time by a brief English-language synopsis. At the level of the text, the once doctrinaire Afrikaners are in retreat from a world dominated increasingly by Western capitalists and English-speakers. As in his 1968 address, Robbertse employs the discourse of *benevolence* that, in this instance, is less concerned with the plight of Afrikaners than with the wellbeing of „Bantus’.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1970 (A.S. ROUX)

Described by South Africa’s first black psychologist, Chabani Manganyi, as “a very thoughtful person” (Segalo, 2006, p. 27), A.S. Roux was a member of PIRSA’s first executive committee and, by 1970, had chaired the psychology department at the University of South Africa for nearly a quarter-of-a-century. His address – *Revolution: A Few Social-Psychological Characteristics* – is divided into two sections: first, a general commentary on the genesis of revolutions, and second, an assessment of revolutionist potential in present-day America. Roux details “the gradual unwinding of historical processes” that preceded the French, Russian, English and American Revolutions, as well as the Reformation (1971, p. 11). He notes further how the predictors of revolution – “travel and wanderings, moral

decline, feelings of frustration and bitterness, economic prosperity, hope among the oppressed and the changed loyalties of the intelligentsia” (pp. 12-13) – are present in some form or another in the United States, though he stops short of making a prediction.

Roux’s position on revolution is not immediately clear. His low-key introduction does not reveal much, containing only the matter-of-fact remark, “We live in a time of revolution” (p. 10). The first indication of his politics comes later in the shape of his description of Patrice Lumumba as “half-literate” (p. 12). Resembling the reformed Robbertse (1971), Roux does not view American capitalism as the enemy. He expresses solidarity with Richard Nixon and claims that it is the “subverters of authority” (Roux, 1971, p. 13) – leftist intellectuals and student radicals – that present the greatest danger to future civilization whose “potential leaders in their youth are wasting their valuable opportunities for preparation... for the increasingly stern demands of the technocentric civilization for which we are heading” (pp. 13, 17). Then, reflecting on one Franklin H. Williams’ claim that “the traditional, hide-bound white-power [university] establishment... has abandoned its democratic ideals, and become bogged down in technocratic irrelevancies” (1969, quoted *ibid.*, p. 14), Roux observes first of all that Williams is “a Negro” (p. 14) before writing him off as one among several instances of “authority figures and intellectuals that attempt to whitewash lawlessness, violence and anarchy” (p. 15).

Since campus radicalism was a response to the ‘social irrelevance’ of universities claiming to serve humankind, Roux’s repudiation of Williams is unusual given the service orientation of Afrikaans-language universities themselves. Like Robbertse (1971), he appears to accept the “Robotism” against which the same president had railed just two years earlier. Another anomaly in Roux’s address is the lack of consideration given to revolutionist potential in *South Africa*. Again similar to Robbertse (1971), Roux distances himself from the Christian-National discourse of dangerousness and from PIRSA’s associated imperative to serve the endangered *volk*. Then again, because the period between the mid-sixties and early-seventies represented the heyday of apartheid rule (D. O’Meara, 1996), the sense of threat may well and truly have subsided. With the Afrikaner predicament no longer what it used to be, PIRSA bigwigs started to go along with the prospect of a technocratic capitalism – and drifted from the ‘ethnic-national relevance’ of yore. This would occasion a corresponding change in the order of discourse.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1972 (H.L. KRIGE)

Talking about *Personality, Giftedness and Creative Thoughts* against the backdrop of “all the dangers of changing world conditions,” H.L. Krige (1973, p. 1) recalls la Grange (1964) and Robbertse (1968) in their pomp, as well as Roux’s address on revolution. He blames the “rapid technological development of Western civilization” for creating “a worrying gap between old and young” (Krige, 1973, p. 1), with the result that “the gifted youth in particular... revolts against existing systems” (p. 2). Speaking to “one of the greatest contradictions of the modern youth rebellion” (p. 4) – gender equality – Krige points out that “the woman... has a smaller brain than the man” (ibid.) and that “because the emotionally labile person displays a tendency to perform worse under pressure... we cannot expect therefore that the achievement of the woman will match that of the man in all respects” (p. 5). According to his research, men are more capable of creative thoughts than women – “it is therefore surely not pure coincidence that the four most creative personalities that I was able to identify during ten years of research in this area were all boys” (p. 7). Krige’s broader point, however, is that unless provision is made for gifted children in the schooling system – many of whom are already underachieving – they will not achieve in later life in accordance with their abilities and may end up dedicating their creative talents to the cause of political rebellion.

Although Krige introduces his topic with political-sounding turns of phrase – “the challenge of the near future”, “the leaders of the future”, “maintenance of current progress” (p. 1) – the remainder of his address is devoted to the humdrum reportage of correlations and means. The discontinuity between his opening paragraphs and what follows is a function of being a new president with no reputation to precede him. Krige must earn, as it were, the right to speak. His use of an *introduction inquisitive*, therefore, is not simply an attempt to persuade his audience that the chosen topic is an important one (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 261). By using this rhetorical form, he accomplishes simultaneously an ethical appeal (*ethos*), revealing his moral character to the audience by speaking a language with which it is well familiar: the significance of giftedness and creativity in a dangerous world. By declaring his allegiance to standard PIRSA doctrine, Krige shows his “respect for the commonly acknowledged virtues” (ibid., p. 73) – that is, the importance of ‘ethnic-national relevance’ in psychological research – while the audience, now convinced of his good intentions, is better disposed to receiving his message.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1973 (A.B. VAN DER MERWE)

The first southerner to be elected PIRSA president,¹¹⁰ A.B. van der Merwe presents a talk on *The Medical Model in Clinical Psychology*. Contradicting the biologism of his 1955 SAPA address, van der Merwe advises the natural scientist against reducing all conscious experience to biochemical reactions, which will result in “the person being treated more and more like a robot” (1974, p. 9). On the other hand, he questions the competence of psychologists in treating a new form of personality disturbances that emerged in the sixties: “[a]nomie, alienation, rootlessness, existential vacuum, nonbeing, meaninglessness, absurdity, despair philosophy, credibility gap, generation gap, campus radical, backlash, etc.” (Mitchell, 1971, p. 120 quoted *ibid.*, p. 11). According to van der Merwe, neither Freudian pessimism nor Rogerian humanism can provide adequate frameworks within which to conceptualize these phenomena. Cognizance must be taken of the importance of the religious sensibility to personality structure:

The religious self enables the human being [to participate] in a completely different relationship to the purely interpersonal, namely, the relationship with his personal Creator. If this highest need of the personality is not satisfied, or if the personal relationship is severed, then we can expect nothing other than alienation, meaninglessness and aimlessness... (p. 15)

Similar to Robbertse (1971) and Roux (1971), van der Merwe is far removed from PIRSA’s customary survivalism. But this is not proof of some intractable discrepancy between the political articulations of southern and northern Afrikaners (D. O’Meara, 1996): after all, Robbertse (1971) and Roux (1971) are hardened northerners themselves who appear to have relinquished many of the ideological assurances of old, while van der Merwe’s views resonate appreciably with those of la Grange (1964) and Robbertse (1968) in recalling the dehumanizing consequences of modern living. All things considered, van der Merwe’s address fits the mold of the 1970s during which PIRSA’s discursive formations become increasingly unstable.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1975 (J.M. DU TOIT)

J.M. du Toit begins his address – *Psychology – the Science of Living?* – with an introduction narrative in which he describes how Sigmund Koch, the editor of a seven-volume tome on the discipline in the 1950s, was “now looking back with a measure of disillusionment and despair at the undertaking of those days” (du Toit, 1975, p. 1). Du Toit accuses educational institutions of “indoctrination”, “tyranny” and “coercion” exercised against their own

¹¹⁰ In his final address as PIRSA president, la Grange refers to van der Merwe as “our dear Vice-President from the South” (1966, p. 13).

students who, under “threat of exams” and faced with “the full authority and eminence of the master”, end up believing that the material transmitted to them is “*the whole truth of undeniable facts*” (ibid., original emphasis). He muses that,

unless a man petrifies in the groove completely, all manner of vexations, doubt, uncertainties, things that bother, questions [must] gather, which get pushed aside for attention one day if there is time.... He asks out loud: “Is there such a thing as truth?” (pp. 1-2)

Taking his own advice “to stare your sacred cows... in the eye” (p. 2), du Toit launches into an excoriating takedown of the discipline, lambasting what he sees as the intersection of cult formation in psychology (p. 3) with the scientific posturing of psychoanalysis (pp. 4-5), psychodiagnostics (pp. 6-10), psychophysiological measurement (pp. 10-13), encounter groups (pp. 13-15), behavior therapy (pp. 15-17) and research practices (pp. 17-21). In contrast to Roux’s (1971) unruly students, du Toit expresses sympathy for his charges who – he quotes Koch –

are asked to read and memorize a literature consisting of an endless set of advertisements for the emptiest of concepts, the most inflated theories, the most trivial ‘findings’, and the most fetishistic yet heuristically self-defeating methods in scholarly history – and all of it conveyed in the dreariest and most turgid prose that ever met the printed page. (du Toit, 1975, p. 25)

Du Toit’s second-guessing of the benefits of registration, meanwhile, contradicts not only the views of la Grange (1962) and Hattingh (1966), but seems ill-advised when one considers that the first Professional Board for Psychology had been established only a year earlier – and after much struggle, at that. Indeed, just as he buttresses his wide-ranging criticism of the discipline with the disclaimer that his intention “is not to discredit psychology” (du Toit, 1975, p. 2), he apologizes for his forthright remarks about the profession with a negative politeness strategy that, in terms of transitivity, makes liberal use of nominalizations and the *passive voice*: “[w]hat is mentioned here is not meant as accusations [but is presented] only as considerations... for deliberation” (p. 21). Nonetheless, despite himself Du Toit ends up questioning the Afrikaner ideal of public service through psychology, claiming that registration does not protect the public but, rather, practitioners themselves, adding that psychotherapy on average achieves nothing.

More than Robbertse (1971), Roux (1971) or van der Merwe (1974), du Toit turns 1960s’ PIRSA dogma on its head. He foregoes the strains of Afrikaner piety for a discourse of *disciplinarity*, while rejecting the charge of scientism (1975, pp. 2, 4). Akin to Robbertse (1969), however, he concedes that “despite advanced methodological development a very large part of the overwhelming amount of research remains insignificant, trivial, practically inconsequential or unreliable” (du Toit, 1975, p. 18). Du Toit’s relentless interrogation of

science and profession constitutes a sweeping re-evaluation of the discipline's 'ethnic-national relevance' credentials. A programmatic U-turn that began with Robbertse (1971) has culminated in iconoclastic free-fall: du Toit's diatribe hints at an association in despair over the merits of its case.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1977 (H.P. LANGENHOVEN)

If du Toit's address marks a low-point in PIRSA's regular order of business, H.P. Langenhoven's *What Can Psychology Do?* comes close to restoring equilibrium. Like du Toit, Langenhoven begins with an introduction narrative, his opening comments an implicit reference to the deadly riots of 1976 and the ongoing border wars:

In 1917, when the U.S.A. entered the First World War, the American Psychological Association appointed a committee to determine what psychology could do to win the war... Today South Africa is also involved in a war, not just a military war but a war on different fronts that is being waged against it – especially psychologically. Today every citizen, every organization, even science, even psychology, should ask itself what it can do to confront our current problems. In my opinion we in psychology have a very meaningful contribution to make... Our country is involved in the first instance in a psychological war that must be fought with the best psychological means. I wonder if the time has not come for our universities to make far better provision for the teaching of military psychology. (1977, pp. 1, 4)

Elsewhere, on an economic front marked by "capital shortages, a decrease in economic activity, unemployment and inflation" (p. 4), Langenhoven recommends that psychologists assist in the identification of leadership potential and the maximization of workforce productivity. As for 'race' relations, "the psychologist can make an important contribution by putting the problem in proper perspective, collecting and analyzing appropriate data, coming to conclusions, communicating these in an understandable and acceptable manner and helping with the implementation of the findings" (p. 8). Similarly, valuable contributions can be – and are being – made in education and mental health.

Given that "psychology in many of these instances is not up to the task of [fulfilling] its exceptionally difficult duties" (p. 10), Langenhoven proceeds to share his reflections on how the discipline can meet these various challenges. He asks if "the courses that we teach and the training that we provide to students [are sensitive to] the needs of the future in a changing society" (p. 11). He observes that a lack of funding in the social sciences explains why the world's biggest problems are human problems and that "[a]ttempts at eliminating the human being from the system are doomed to failure" (p. 13). Furthermore, the lack of incentives for researchers means that research for curiosity's sake is becoming scarcer too. On the other hand, "we are not only responsible for the development of psychology as

science but also of psychology as a profession that must deliver a service to society” (ibid.). Accordingly, close collaboration between PIRSA and SAPA – “which is the case anyway” (p. 14) – becomes a necessity. For Langenhoven, there is nothing odd about having two associations negotiating with one Professional Board: “the biggest problem in my opinion is the group that stands apart and does not join either of the associations,” he says (p. 15). He adds that it can be arranged for “non-whites” to be admitted to PIRSA if sufficient members desire this – although “the opportunity [to join] SAPA already exists” (ibid.).

Consonant with early PIRSA addresses, Langenhoven recapitulates the precariousness of the South African situation and the consequent duty of psychologists to intervene. Countering du Toit’s nihilism, Langenhoven commends social engagement to his listeners but does so from a position of seeming remoteness. For example, he never pauses to disclose the identity of the enemy in this “war of low intensity” (p. 3). As for the two-year compulsory military service, he speaks impersonally of “the absolute importance of special steps being taken [to ensure] that *these people’s* time is put to best use” (ibid., added emphasis). The proposed solution for „race’ relations – quoted earlier – is similarly abstract: all that is required is for one to follow the standard research recipe, namely, problem formulation, data collection, data analysis, conclusion, communication of findings and implementation, in that order. On the professional front, there is nothing more to be done vis-à-vis PIRSA-SAPA relations as the two associations are collaborating already, nor is there any reason to tamper with PIRSA’s whites-only policy since SAPA is already willing to admit “non-whites” to its ranks. In other places, “the group that stands apart” (p. 15) remains unnamed, while nonspecific talk of “pro-active forces”, “reactive forces”, “pressure from outside” (p. 6) and “people” (e.g. pp. 7-8) proliferates. In light of Langenhoven’s frequent use of the high modality auxiliary verb, *must*, it is not clear where the necessary human agents will be coming from when his subjects’ identities remain consistently indeterminate. In retrospect, it is poignant that la Grange (1964) warned of the existential threat facing the Afrikaner nation, Robbertse (1968) grieved the loss of man’s soul and van der Merwe (1974) inveighed against alienation, for, by the time one gets to Langenhoven, there appear to be no sentient beings left at all. It is as if du Toit’s annihilation of the discipline ends up depriving Langenhoven of the very protagonists his plan of action requires. Although Langenhoven goes through the motions of advancing a *volksdiens* discourse – the country is „at war’ while the discipline struggles with „exceptionally difficult duties’ to „deliver a service to society’ – the *volk* itself seems to have disappeared.

DISCUSSION

In the 1960s, PIRSA advances the cause of „ethnic-national relevance’ by drawing on a discourse of *volksdiens* (la Grange, 1964, 1966; Robbertse, 1964, 1967, 1969). For most of that decade, addresses are saturated with concerns about the survival of Afrikanerdom and the resultant need for a psychology oriented towards ethnic-national service. Over the course of the 1970s, however, calls for „ethnic-national relevance’ recede into the background. Increasingly less mention is made of South African politics – Robbertse (1971) and Langenhoven (1977) are nominal exceptions – as speakers discuss international developments (Roux, 1971), intra-disciplinary matters (du Toit, 1975; Krige, 1973) and the existential angst of human beings in general (van der Merwe, 1974). This is surprising in view of the fact that, by the early seventies, the apartheid state was beginning to show signs of decline. Instead of a reinvigorated Christian-National discourse of danger, one observes a growing distance from the travails of local politics that manifests rhetorically as a series of *red herrings* (Corbett & Connors, 1999), including culturally imperiled Bantus (Robbertse, 1971), intellectually inferior women (Krige, 1973), pervasive anomie (van der Merwe, 1974) and the scientific posturing of an unscientific discipline (du Toit, 1975).

The discordance between PIRSA’s discursive orders of the 1960s and 1970s has much to do with the declaration of a republic in 1961, when Afrikaner nationalism forfeited its *sine qua non*: it “could no longer avail itself of its old British bogeyman to mobilise the *volk*” (D. O’Meara, 1996, p. 116).¹¹¹ Meanwhile, economic and cultural developments weakened the apartheid project further as *verligtes* (reformists) and *verkrampes* (conservatives) battled each other for control of the NP. On the economic front, the trouble began in 1964 with a mining agreement between Federale Mynbou and Harry Oppenheimer’s Anglo American Corporation. Afrikanerdom was outraged. Afrikaner nationalist discourse was zealously anti-capitalist, sustained by “the myth of a classless *volk*” (ibid., p. 136). After having struggled valiantly against the depredations of British imperialism, the *volk* appeared now to be cutting deals with „Hoggenheimer’ capitalism. The uncomfortable truth, however, was that the NP’s economic policy of favoring Afrikaner workers had increased their social stratification to such an extent that, by the mid-sixties, it was no longer possible to identify the *volk*’s common interest. Meanwhile, on the cultural scene, the rise of the *Sestigers* – a literary

¹¹¹ Verwoerd himself would abandon the goal of fully Afrikanerizing the country. Pursuing a conciliatory line with English-speaking whites and pressing ahead with his ‘Homelands’ policy, he was always headed for trouble with the far right. But because of the prime minister’s commanding personality, dissent did not break out until after his assassination in September 1966.

movement that tackled questions on sexual liberation, racial tolerance and modernity – scandalized the sedate Afrikaner establishment but ignited the imagination of Afrikaans readers (Giliomee, 2003). Conservatives interpreted the trend as evidence of a creeping communist influence: the remainder of the decade saw much maneuvering within Afrikaner cultural institutions and a concomitant struggle to define authentic Afrikanerdom (D. O'Meara, 1996).

Complicating these inter-Afrikaner tensions was the eruption of a press war that stoked longstanding north-south rivalries. When, in late 1965, the Cape-based *Nasionale Pers* decided to publish a Sunday paper – *Die Beeld* – in the Transvaal, it loosed upon itself the fury of northerners, lighting the fuse for an all-out war between *verligtes* and *verkrampes*. Driven by commercial interests, the press saga drove another stake into the heart of Afrikaner unity. With Verwoerd's killing and John Vorster's succession to the prime ministership, the flames of discontent spread rapidly. Vorster had no NP track record to speak of, nor did he enjoy a provincial constituency within the party. With a consequently hands-off leadership style, he not only came close to presiding over what would have been a catastrophic splitting of the *volk* but also proved unable to provide any ideological direction for the party (D. O'Meara, 1996). It was only when he revisited his strongman past – as one-time Justice Minister, Vorster is credited with having put down the black resistance of the early sixties – that a semblance of order was restored. In 1969, after establishing the brutal Bureau for State Security and using it as his *de facto* political base, Vorster – a *verligte* by default – crushed what had been building into a formidable *verkrampste* insurrection. While he may have lacked the ideological nous of his predecessor, he was not short on pragmatism, for, despite flirting with defeat at the hands of those more inclined to a *laager* psychology, state had trumped party. With the emergence of newly-rich Afrikaners during the boom years of the sixties, Vorster was indifferent in the face of *verkrampste* disgust at “the crass materialist excess of the new Afrikaner bourgeoisie [and] its easy renunciation of the populist civic culture of Afrikaner nationalism for capitalist wheeling and dealing” (ibid., p. 165).

The years of plenty did not last. South Africa's capital-intensive mode of production led to rising unemployment among black African workers while job reservation for whites and movement restrictions on blacks translated into a shortage of workers with the requisite technical skills (D. O'Meara, 1996). Inflation started rising in the early seventies, black African workers began striking and, by 1976, the country had been plunged into a recession. The buffer states, too, were seeing revolutionary change. ZANU guerrillas succeeded in

infiltrating Rhodesia in 1972, Mozambique attained independence in 1975 via the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, the South African army suffered a humiliating defeat in early 1976 at the hands of Angolan and Cuban forces, and, after the death-by-shooting of scores of Soweto youths later that year, the NP could no longer swear by the morality of the Afrikaner mission (D. O'Meara, 1996). If the sixties were about the splintering of the party, the seventies witnessed the decline of the state.

When interpreting the PIRSA addresses for the period in question – 1963 to 1977 – the socio-political currents of those years assume heightened significance. The speeches point clearly to the progressive unraveling of PIRSA's ideological coherence, which can be explained in terms of several developments. First, with the fulfillment of the republic dream, nationalist discourse no longer exerted a vice-like grip on the collective imagination of Afrikaners. Second, economic progress led to the stratification of the *volk* and the mitigation of anti-capitalist scorn. Third, cultural trends undermined the received wisdoms of Afrikanerdom. Fourth, a rancorous press war fomented regional divisions. And fifth, contrasting prime ministerial leadership styles ensured that the ideological certainties of bygone years would be lost forever.

PIRSA's inability to get back on the ideological bandwagon was not the result of deliberately nonpartisan professionalizing drives – it was only Hattingh (1966) who paid professionalization any serious attention at all. Rather, it was the inevitable consequence of the bandwagon itself – Grand Apartheid – beginning to lose its wheels altogether. During the sixties, PIRSA, in pursuit of 'ethnic-national relevance', could appeal to an age-old discourse of dangerousness. At the start of the seventies, however, with the fragility of the apartheid project starting to show, it was now a generic 'social relevance' that was sought, rationalized by identifying conditions obtaining in the wider world – such as Western capitalism (Robbertse, 1971), the contradictions of a technocratic social order (Krige, 1973) and the preponderance of anomie (van der Merwe, 1974). Later still, one encounters the inversion of 'social relevance' in the forms of an irreverent critique of an irrelevant discipline (du Toit, 1975), an impugment of the Afrikaner public service ideal (ibid.) and a formulation of 'socially relevant' psychology best described as rarefied (Langenhoven, 1977). With its politics on the brink, one discerns in the final years of PIRSA's existence the collapse of its 'relevance' register. Disconnected for all intents and purposes from the lexicon of its founding philosophy, the association itself was soon to run its course.

CHAPTER 9: SAPA, PIRSA, PASA & OASSSA ADDRESSES (1978-1993)

Knowledge for the sake of understanding, not merely to prevail, that is the essence of our being... For if we fail to struggle and fail to think beyond our petty lot, we accept a sordid role. (Simon Biesheuvel quoting Vannevar Bush – PASA address, 1986)

[T]raditional professional organisations... have in the perception of both the people of this country and beyond, been seen to be too closely allied to the ideology and practices of the apartheid state and are therefore irrelevant to people's needs. (Jerry Coovadia – OASSSA address, 1987)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter analyzes addresses delivered at SAPA/PIRSA, PASA and OASSSA congresses between 1978 and 1993. It details how, during the height of resistance to apartheid rule, SAPA, PIRSA and PASA advanced a depoliticized order of discourse consisting of *disciplinary*, *professionalist* and *cultural* discourses in which „social relevance’ was either defined as a non-issue or articulated in politically conservative terms. It illustrates further how OASSSA, in its rendition of „social relevance’, promoted a *liberationist* discourse that insisted on the harmful impact of apartheid policy on mental health and the ensuing obligation of mental health professionals to align themselves with the mass resistance movement. The chapter then describes PASA’s anointment of a *salvation* discourse according to which the pursuit of „social relevance’, with a new political era beckoning, became a rescuing act that would assure the future of the discipline. It concludes with an account of the political climate in which these contrasting discursive formations took shape.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1978 (H.P. LANGENHOVEN – PIRSA)

In 1974, SAPA and PIRSA’s joint efforts culminated in registration becoming a requirement by law (Nicholas, 1990). By November 1976, PIRSA was putting out feelers with a view to establishing an even closer alliance – including the possibility of outright unification. Dreyer Kruger, for example, who had opposed the registration of the Indian psychologist Chanderpaul Ramphal in 1960, now believed that the existence of two associations was not in the best interests of the discipline: apartheid policy was not working, professional divisions made little sense to the younger generation of psychologists and “[n]o black or brown group had made use of PIRSA’s willingness to assist in the establishment of separate organizations for these groups” (PIRSA Newsletter 16, 1977, p. 3 quoted *ibid.*, p. 62). Kruger’s position, however, far from represented the official party line: PIRSA hardliners were not interested in

integration, while moderates such as Langenhoven (1977) were more circumspect in their appraisals. It took, consequently, several more years before the amalgamation was realized, but between 1978 and 1982, SAPA and PIRSA agreed to hold joint national congresses.

In *The Registration of Psychologists*,¹¹² Langenhoven describes at length the events that led to the establishment of the first Professional Board, pausing to pay tribute to the many psychologists that contributed to the cause but “are no longer with us to reap the benefits” (1978, p. 4). He states that the Board was established “with a view to protecting the general public from psychological malpractices” (p. 3), which should be “more inclined to utilize the services of psychologists” (pp. 5-6). In turn, “the reputation of the profession and the status of practitioners can be improved” (p. 6). Unlike la Grange – who had in mind only “the professional interests of all psychologists in the Republic” (1962, p. 17) – and du Toit – for whom “an organized profession... solidifies sooner or later into a more or less rigid bureaucracy” (1975, p. 23) – Langenhoven believes that professionalization “is a very noble cause [from which] the public, psychology as a science and profession, as well as all practicing psychologists should reap the benefits” (1978, p. 6).

Langenhoven expresses his concern, however, at the possibility that certain provisions in the Medical, Dental and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act may end up placing much-needed psychological services beyond the reach of the community. By reserving certain practices for registered psychologists, the Act can “do serious harm to psychology and deprive society of valuable services” (p. 8). Also – as in his 1977 address – he repudiates “the false impression that the introduction of the Professional Board has rendered SAPA and PIRSA superfluous” (p. 13). Statutory recognition is not a goal in itself: “[it] is a necessary means to help ensure that the goal of good psychological services to the community and satisfaction with the people that deliver it is attained” (p. 14). Although the Professional Board continues to function beneath the aegis of the South African Medical and Dental Council, the goal of psychologists – departing from Hattingh’s (1966) position – should not be the attainment of full independence: “[w]e should rather with all our strength develop our profession to deliver the kinds of services to society by which we shall earn their respect” (Langenhoven, 1978, p. 14). What this requires is not “a long list of regulations which even prescribes the size of nameplates” (p. 15) – “[i]n this way we do not win the respect of the public” (ibid.) – but continued SAPA-PIRSA cooperation in order “to keep [the

¹¹² Full text versions of this speech are available in both English and Afrikaans. Most excerpts here have been taken from the English version.

Professional Board] on the right track” (ibid.). Langenhoven concludes with the assurance that “I have no fear that on the road ahead there will not be work for psychologists” (p. 16).

As he did the year before, Langenhoven continues to speak the language of public service – the difference, on this occasion, is that he makes no reference to the domestic political landscape. Instead – like the Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s – he inserts the service motif into a *professionalist* discourse, precipitating something of a contradiction: protection of the term „psychologist’ means not only that “better services can be rendered to society” (p. 6) but also that “[r]egistration is compulsory for everybody *who wishes to practice as a psychologist for a profit*” (p. 5, added emphasis). The choice of words is revealing: Langenhoven implies that not everyone practices for a profit and – true to the Afrikaner service ideal – distances himself from the profit motive. That he stops to draw this distinction arises from the fact that the composition of his audience has changed. Langenhoven is no longer preaching to the converted: he is addressing the first-ever joint SAPA-PIRSA congress and must innovate, therefore, a non-partisan, inclusive discourse. It is unavoidable that incongruities such as the service-profit antinomy will arise, the direct result of his discursive hybridization (Parker, 1992).

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1979 (L.C. GERDES – SAPA)

Appointed in 1975 as the first female head of UNISA’s Department of Psychology, Lily Gerdes observes that her presidential term coincides with the discipline’s international centenary. In her address – *Perspectives, Issues and the Need for a History of Psychology in South Africa*¹¹³ – Gerdes explains the wording of the title: “I hesitate to use the phrase ‘South African Psychology’ because this would imply that a psychology peculiar to South Africa had been produced” (1979, p. 1). She notes that “psychology and psychologists stand on the brink of a new era” heralded by

- (i) *A growing spirit of co-operation between SAPA and SIRSA.*¹¹⁴
- (ii) *A new system of professional registration.*
- (iii) *The urgent and far-reaching changes which are taking place in South Africa.* (p. 2)

Accordingly, she encourages – among other objectives – interdisciplinary collaboration, the relating of “teaching, research, professional training and community needs to one another by

¹¹³ The address was delivered in English. I am deeply indebted to Professor Gerdes for making this speech available to me.

¹¹⁴ SIRSA is the Afrikaans-language equivalent of the PIRSA acronym and stands for “Sielkundige Instituut van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika.”

being sensitive to real-life situations and crises” (ibid.), and a consideration of “what psychology can do to enhance the future of this country and its peoples” (ibid.).

For Gerdes, “[p]sychology is the study of human development and behaviour in a variety of contexts and in interaction with many systems of which the individual is a part” (p. 3). These include the family system, the educational and knowledge system, the continuing education system, the recreation system, the health system, the social and ideological system, the economic and occupational system, and the environmental system. She proceeds, then, to ask:

[I]s the clinician trained in a mental hospital equipped to deal with the cardiac patient in a general hospital or with a woman in a maternity home facing the birth of her first child?... On the other hand, one may similarly ask whether the psychologist who is a content specialist, say in the field of human development, is by virtue of his theoretical knowledge equipped to deal with a child suffering from some kind of developmental delay? (p. 4)

Academic departments need to distinguish between general and specific knowledge, which, for Gerdes, requires “[t]he introduction of a specialist register at doctoral level [that] will encourage highly specialized training” (p. 5). This suggests the usefulness of having different kinds of psychological associations: a “General Psychological Association” (p. 7) that oversees the interests of the discipline and specialist professional groups that operate beneath this umbrella body. Gerdes argues that there is also a need to utilize the services of lower-level graduates with undergraduate and honors degrees because of the high demand for services, the wastage involved in using “highly trained persons for certain activities” (p. 8), and the fact that “[t]he greatest shortage of registered psychologists exists in the Black, Indian and so-called Coloured population groups” (p. 9). The contributions of laypersons are also not to be underestimated, particularly since “the indications are that psychologists will increasingly move into the community” (p. 11). A professional focus on prevention and “optimum development” is essential (p. 13) as is a re-evaluation of disciplinary values – for example, the sexism of psychoanalysis.

Gerdes is speaking the language of ‘relevance’: from her use of systems theory, her positive valuation of the role of lay persons in the profession and her concern with the shortage of psychologists in other “population groups”, her objective is evidently to promote the ‘social relevance’ of the discipline. Nonetheless, while she regards the “social and ideological system” as an integral part of the human context, she never explores this system that has brought untold misery into the lives of the majority of South Africans. She focuses, rather, on the “cardiac patient”, a “woman in a maternity home” and helping “the aged in their own homes” (p. 11). For Gerdes, ‘social relevance’ amounts to a capacity for

“involvement with „normal’ crisis situations of non-psychiatric and non-clinical groups” (ibid.), and implies further differentiation of the professional register. The idea of drawing on lay expertise, meanwhile, occurred to her not on the basis of local insights but during “my recent study-tour overseas to the U.S.A., Netherlands, England, Germany and Austria. In a hotel in the United States I was, for example, amazed by an array of brochures on where to seek help for [a variety of] problems” (p. 10). She also desists from explaining why the “shortage of registered psychologists [that] exists in the Black, Indian and so-called Coloured population groups” (p. 9) is problematic in the first place. It may be that there is nothing to explain: her allusion to various racial groupings is symptomatic of the country’s hegemonic discourse of difference and its taken-for-granted implication that effective psychological interventions can only occur between patients and professionals of the same „population group’. In sum, Gerdes’ understanding of „social relevance’ is politically conservative, articulating itself in the form of a *professionalist* discourse.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1980 (I. VAN W. RAUBENHEIMER – PIRSA)

Naas Raubenheimer begins his address – *Psychology in South Africa: Development, Trends and Future Perspectives*¹¹⁵ – with the observation that “South Africans are moving into an era which is characterized by marked changes in almost all spheres of life – political, societal, religious, social and psychological” (1981, p. 1). He adds that since “South Africans today ask penetrating questions about the future... it is imperative that psychologists or behavioural scientists should be certain about the role they can play in contributing to, or in adapting to the processes of change” (ibid.). He reflects positively on the growing profile of academic, professional and research psychology in the country and notes that “psychologists in South Africa have succeeded in attracting the attention of the public at large. The demand for their services is certain, they are increasingly acquiring esteem and respect, and have secured a particular status in society” (p. 3).

Nevertheless, Raubenheimer is critical of the state of the discipline. Broadly, “all work done by South African psychologists” (ibid.) is either unempirical or shows “little or no concern for generalized validity and applicability to real life situations” (ibid.). The local corpus of psychological knowledge amounts to little more than “an overwhelming collection of facts” (ibid.), while psychological practice inhabits “a climate of pragmatism and superficiality” (ibid.). In order to integrate this “uncoordinated collection of facts” (p. 4), Raubenheimer talks up the potential of a general systems approach that, because “it

¹¹⁵ The address was delivered in English.

comprises a breadth of vision... [it] makes provision for the integration of knowledge in a wide array of fields” (p. 4). He concludes that “[i]t seems as if the end of an era in many spheres of life has been announced.... All factors considered, it would appear that two interesting decades await us, a period during which unprecedented progress and breakthroughs could be made” (p. 5).

Like Gerdes, Raubenheimer reminds the audience of the momentous changes sweeping through the country – and, as with his predecessor, he provides no details about what or whom these changes involve. Because of his acknowledgement of “the contemporary South African scene” (p. 1), he ends up invoking the importance of systems theory – again similar to Gerdes – but without a grounded demonstration of its suitability for the South African situation. Instead, when referencing the national context – that is, the impending collapse of apartheid ideology – he opts for the orthodoxies of scientific language, describing through his use of *passivization* (“has been announced”, “could be made” – to mention already-cited examples) a tumultuous process of social change that is seemingly agentless. While he asserts that “the end of the 20th century is no longer on the distant horizon” (p. 5) and that, therefore, a more „socially relevant’ psychology is urgently required, the transitivity features of his speech end up keeping the exact details of „the end of the 20th century’ at arm’s length. Raubenheimer, in fact, spends the greater portion of his address reflecting on “a psychology whose metaphysical framework... is outdated [and whose] conception of its subject matter, man, is no longer appropriate if indeed it ever was” (p. 3). Taken up with fundamental questions, he ends up endorsing a discourse of *disciplinarity*.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 1980 (D.J.W. STRÜMPFER – SAPA)

In his keynote address – *Towards a More Socially Responsive Psychology*¹¹⁶ – Deo Strümpfer pauses to reflect on the congress theme of „Taking Responsibility’. He claims that, given “the incidence of social pathology among our black population” (1981, p. 18) and the rates of divorce and coronary heart disease on the white side, “there is undoubtedly enough to be done by psychologists” (ibid.). He finds himself wondering, however, “[w]hat can be done to wake us up” (ibid.), seeing as

South African psychologists are often conspicuous by their absence [when it comes to] getting out of our laboratories into the real world, out of an environment controlled and manipulated into experimental sterility, into the places where people live and work in dread, dearth and desperation. (ibid.)

¹¹⁶ The address was delivered in English.

Strümpfer notes that “from where the budget is to be balanced many of our activities look like games academics play” (p. 19). And yet, he says, “I am fully aware of all the problems inherent in defining what is ‘relevant’. I know that today’s basic research may tomorrow produce an explosion of technological applications” (ibid.). This does not prevent him, however, from criticizing most psychologists who “tend to be method-orientated rather than problem-orientated” (ibid.), as a result of which “we dawdle... [and] get tied up in irrelevancies” (ibid.). Apropos of the experimental method, Strümpfer questions both “the extent to which empirical generalizations are feasible in a world in which most effects are interactive” (ibid.), as well as the ethics of deception, citing a host of papers from the American ‘relevance’ corpus (e.g. Cronbach, 1975; Gergen, 1973; Ghiselli, 1974). He argues by way of contrast that data generated by qualitative methods “tend to have greater credibility due to their ‘real life’ character” and that these methods are more respecting of the humanity of research participants (Strümpfer, 1981, p. 22).

Strümpfer disagrees with Raubenheimer’s misgivings about universities “yield[ing] to the pragmatic demands of society, which expects knowledge and research to produce practical and usable results that can be applied cook-book fashion to everyday pursuits” (p. 24). For Raubenheimer, solutions to practical problems must be grounded in “scientifically verified systems of knowledge” (ibid.); Strümpfer, on the other hand, believes in the historicity of psychological knowledge. For the latter, psychology’s popularization in the mass media means that “it is up to us to assure that what is available will be applied as intelligently and as wisely as possible, under our own guidance wherever possible” (ibid.). Strümpfer is advocating a closer – not a more distant – relationship between psychology and the real world, one in which “psychologists maintain constant dialogue with decision makers” (p. 25). What this requires is “willingness and courage to get our hands dirty. [It is] when we really accept responsibility [that] we become... both learned scientists and useful servants of humanity” (ibid.). Strümpfer recommends accordingly a need for “better understanding, as well as new or improved technology” (ibid.) on such social issues as school boycotts, labor disputes, black unemployment, disintegration of the black family and the future likelihood of urban terrorism. Although he denies “suggesting that psychologists should enter the political arena as ordinary citizens – that is a matter of choice and conscience” (p. 26) – he expresses the view that industrial psychologists in particular should be trained “to become active agents of this kind of change... [and] that such changes should be motivated by convictions of social responsibility, so as to contribute indirectly to the struggle against social pathology” (ibid.). What South Africa needs is an “applied social psychology” or “community psychology” (p.

27) in which parochial-minded psychologists set aside “their self-serving subdiscipline competitiveness and learn to co-operate and negotiate” (ibid.); in this way, disparate fields can “be brought together and integrated innovatively” (ibid.).

Strümpfer’s address achieves several firsts vis-à-vis the quest for ‘social relevance’. Unlike any of his predecessors, he is the first to speak of ‘relevance’ reflexively, reifying it as something to be thought about in its own right – as in his remark, “I am fully aware of all the problems inherent in defining what is ‘relevant’” (p. 19). It is his familiarity with American ‘relevance’ literature – in his speech he draws extensively on his experiences during a study tour of the United States – that enables him to make this and other critical comments about ‘social relevance.’ Moreover, his interrogation of the concept will shift mere *talk* about ‘social relevance’ to an actual *debate* about it. Second, Strümpfer is also first in relating ‘social relevance’ to the concrete social problems endemic to the country, emphasizing by means of an *alliterative scheme of repetition*, for instance, how “people live and work in dread, dearth and desperation” (p. 18). Whereas Langenhoven (1978), Gerdes (1979) and Raubenheimer (1981) flatter only to deceive, Strümpfer pulls few punches about the starkness of lived realities. Third, he is the first proponent of ‘social relevance’ to resort to apologetics in order to tone down what must have sounded like political hard-talk. For example, while he endorses “getting out of our laboratories into the real world”, he also talks up the value of basic research (Strümpfer, 1981, p. 18); elsewhere, he considers it “a moral obligation” (p. 19) that psychologists contribute to social wellbeing despite casting political participation as “a matter of choice and conscience” (p. 26). And fourth, Strümpfer is unique among his contemporaries for expanding the terms of reference. ‘Relevance’ does not connote an exclusive relationship between psychology and society, but encompasses an industrial-commercial aspect as well: Strümpfer’s use of such terms as “budget” (p. 19), “go-getter” (ibid.), “decision makers” (p. 25) and “technology” (ibid.) is as much a nod to his own background in industrial psychology as it will prove to have been a harbinger of the discipline’s eventual adoption of a technocratic rationality.

Then again, in view of his honorific as a ‘dissident’ Afrikaner psychologist (Nell, 1993), Strümpfer’s non-treatment of apartheid policy and practice *per se* is worthy of note. In fact, no different from his peers, he never mentions the ‘A’-word. Other than presenting a litany of social problems, there is little to no consideration of their *political* correlates – only agentless nominalizations such as “poverty” and “unemployment” that are true of most countries in the world. Consequently, much as Strümpfer declares himself a supporter of

„social relevance’, his reading of it is not an explicitly politicized version, which, by 1980, is yet to come.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1982 (G. RADEMEYER – PASA)

The first president of the newly minted, racially integrated Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA), Gert Rademeyer, celebrates how, “[f]or the first time in more than twenty years psychologists are uniting enthusiastically and pooling their resources in an effort to play a more constructive role in South African society” (1982, p. 1).¹¹⁷ In his view, the SAPA-PIRSA split of the early sixties happened because “this first Society fell prey to centrifugal forces... [but f]ortunately enough, centripetal forces also emerged” (ibid.). He then recaps the congress theme of „Interpersonal Relationships’, which refers, firstly, to “the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society at this point in time” (p. 2), and secondly, to “the epistemological shift which we are currently experiencing in our discipline... and I am obviously referring to the advent and development of *general systems theory*” (ibid., original emphasis).

Rademeyer spends the majority of his fifteen-page speech detailing the clinical insights of such family therapy luminaries as Jay Haley, Mara Palazolli and Salvador Minuchin. Apart from one comment-in-passing about political activism during his discussion of morphogenesis (p. 8), his overriding concern is with the quality of relationships between 1) organized psychology and the Professional Board; 2) the various professional psychological associations (e.g. clinical, counseling and educational psychology); and 3) psychologists and the public. Using various principles from family therapy, he demonstrates how these relationships can become healthier.

Regarding the relationship between psychology and society, Rademeyer speaks of “the patient” and how, when resistance arises in the therapeutic relationship, “it is perhaps not the patient that is not ready for therapy, but the therapist who is not ready for the patient” (p. 14), which stems from the “negative labels that therapists attach to patients as a result of the DSM-III” (ibid.). Despite referencing “the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society” (p. 2), Rademeyer applies the principles of systems theory in an apolitical manner. Similar to Langenhoven (1978), Gerdes (1979) and Raubenheimer (1981), he offers token acknowledgement of the deteriorating political situation.¹¹⁸ All the while, a *professionalist* discourse proceeds to dominate a discursive order whose organizing principle

¹¹⁷ This address was delivered in both English and Afrikaans. I am grateful to Professor Rademeyer for sending me a copy of his speech.

¹¹⁸ Seeing as their audiences are racially heterogeneous, it is the least all four presidents can do.

is the consolidation of what is still a fledgling profession. While he makes implicit reference to the question of „social relevance’ by virtue of his periodic invocation of the psychology–society dialectic, Rademeyer does so within the confines of a depersonalized rhetoric. The use of terms such as “systems” (Rademeyer, 1982, p. 2), “centrifugal forces” (p. 1), “centripetal forces” (ibid.), “seesaw” (p.4), “homeostatic” (p. 12), “digital” (p. 6), “analogic” (ibid.), “pathogenesis” (p. 7), “morphogenesis” (p. 7), “elements” (p. 9), “cybernetics” (pp. 11-12) and “the new technology of behavior modification” (p. 12) creates the impression of a stage without actors, muddying the ethico-moral dimension of the world about which he speaks. While systems theory can offer valuable commentary on political phenomena, in Rademeyer’s discursive universe it succeeds only in technicizing social processes.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1983 (R.C. ALBINO – PASA)

In his address – *Psychology and South African Society*¹¹⁹ – Ronald Albino proposes that the role of South African psychologists is to facilitate the development of an integrated society in which all are accommodated and none are marginalized. In his view, psychologists are not meant “to assist the imposition of a particular way of life on the whole society” (Albino, 1983, p. 1). After all, “there are moral choices facing the psychologist in this society, for the choice of a way of life is a moral and not a technical problem” (ibid.). Commenting on the recent creation of PASA, he observes “the caravan to have many parts, each differing from the others and often in conflict” (ibid.), a state of affairs he attributes to “basic differences in what it is thought Psychology should be” (ibid.). For Albino, the subject matter of psychology is determined by the prevailing ideology – which is that “the only forms of management and organisation and of life appropriate for an urban and industrial society are those devised by European and American minds” (p. 2). For this reason, he predicts that “we will be unable to be useful in the new society which is undoubtedly to come” (p. 1).

Although Albino does not reflect on the form this “new society” will take, he is issuing a warning to his colleagues: they run the risk of becoming „culturally irrelevant’. Reminiscing about the early days of South African psychology, he recalls how “we psychologists were a tentacle of the North lying in an alien land, believing and acting as Northerners – intellectual colonialists” (p. 2) – who were Dutch and British disciples of Western liberal capitalism. Because he advocates the importance of research on black Africans, Albino anticipates the possible objection that “you may be taking my suggestions as

¹¹⁹ The address was delivered in English. I am grateful to Professor Margaret Daymond for making it available to me.

supporting arguments for the separation of peoples. I most certainly do not intend that,” he disclaims (p. 6). Instead, he goes on the rhetorical counter-attack, insisting that such research has been overlooked because of “the belief that what has been discovered of the basic psychological functions of Western man is universal” (ibid.). He identifies a knowledge-gap – a dearth of “local descriptive theories” (p. 7) – that must be filled if we are “to live together in a cooperative social order” (p. 6). What is needed, therefore, is “a new breed of investigator which I will, following industry, call a development researcher” (p. 7). Albino is skeptical of what he deems an unhelpful tendency within psychology to separate basic from applied knowledge – hence the appeal for a special type of researcher capable of generating both forms of knowledge. Indeed, “[i]n South Africa most of our clinicians and applied psychologists work in the Westernised part of our society and they are ill-equipped, *either in skills or understanding*, to enter the larger and very heterogeneous society” (p. 9, added emphasis).

Albino is enunciating a *cultural* discourse on ‘relevance’ that will become increasingly influential in the post-apartheid years. He may appear fluent in the language of science – for example, he speaks of “neurological structures”, “computer firm ware” and “the functional architecture of the brain” (p. 5) – but he offers also this categorical takedown of Popperian dogma:

And there is a pressure on all psychology students to adhere to this creed – for it is a creed, and, as the philosophers of science will tell you, not a very good one, even as a description of a hard science. (p. 9)

For Albino, the matter is straightforward: the discipline is ‘culturally relevant’ only insofar as it generates culturally inclusive knowledge. But his position also involves a measure of racial othering peculiar to iterations of ‘cultural relevance’. As a result, when juxtaposing sameness and difference, Albino finds himself encumbered with the stubborn intricacies of apartheid logic.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 1986 (S. BIESHEUVEL – PASA)

By this stage of his career, Simon Biesheuvel has become a grandfather-figure in the discipline and describes himself as “a member of the old school” (1987, p. 1). Conceding that PASA has deliberated at length on his chosen topic, he proceeds nevertheless with an examination of the role psychology can play in present-day South Africa. Thus he begins his talk – *Psychology: Science and Politics*¹²⁰ – by lamenting the bleakness in the world:

¹²⁰ From this point onwards, all addresses appear to have been delivered exclusively in English.

“Mankind is not in very good shape anywhere, as we all know” (ibid.). In South Africa, however, these world-wide problems – ecological dangers, the threat of another world war, stress-induced ill-health – have been overshadowed by “the power struggle between a dominant white minority and a disadvantaged black majority [that is aggravated by] strife within each ethnic group about the course to be followed to arrive at a settlement” (ibid.). Yet there is hope that community psychology and general systems theory can be “of considerable help in gaining an understanding of the South African turmoil” (p. 2). Biesheuvel notes the growing awareness of “the relativity of psychological constructs” (ibid.) and, accordingly, the importance of developing indigenous psychologies “[f]or a country like ours, with so many culturally divergent value systems and ways of living” (p. 3).

Biesheuvel insists, however, that while science “has never been value free” (ibid.), the scientific *method* “should be value-free and obedient only to its own prescriptions” (ibid.). He reasons that,

[b]ecause of the plural composition of South African society, the firm convictions held by many of us, and the strong moral and partisan feelings aroused in all who are concerned with the outcome of the present conflict, it is essential that social scientists who believe that it is their duty to contribute to its resolution, not just as concerned citizens but as scientists, should be clearly aware how and where values and ideology can legitimately enter in scientific endeavour, how and where they cannot. (ibid.)

Just as he castigates “academic bully boys” (p. 4) for visiting physical violence on Hans Eysenck and Arthur Jensen, Biesheuvel disagrees with the position put forward in a recent paper by Dawes for whom “[a]partheid and health, whether mental or physical, are irreconcilable” (1985, p. 60). For Biesheuvel, “[t]he stresses experienced by blacks in their daily lives cannot by any means be ascribed totally to apartheid” (1987, p. 5), which is, at best, “only a proximate cause” (p. 4). Rather, what underlies the enactment of apartheid law is, first of all, white prejudice, which is only incidentally racial; second, white fear, which “is not entirely irrational” (p. 5); and third, economic exploitation, for which “[t]here is no guarantee whatever that there would be a radical change in the power position of the black masses if they exchanged a white for a black government elite” (ibid.).

Whereas Dawes argues that South African psychology is bordering on ‘social irrelevance’ because of a reliance on band-aid interventions – “the source of the illness [i.e. apartheid policy] needs attention if we are to move towards primary intervention” (1985, p. 57) – Biesheuvel believes that

what is needed first of all is in-depth study of the numerous factors that influence their [black] lives, the interaction of these factors and their susceptibility to intervention. The pathogenic

apartheid laws to which Dawes refers are only part of the situation, albeit a very important part. (1987, p. 6)

The task at hand, therefore, is not the sole preserve of clinical psychologists, but requires input from multiple disciplines including sociology, social anthropology, economics, demography and political science.

Joining the ideological bandwagon of those inside and outside South Africa who demonstrate against apartheid will achieve little or nothing, apart from moral self-satisfaction on the part of the protesters. Anyway, it is wrong to use the prestige attaching to the clinical psychological profession to speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise. To accuse those who refuse to tag along of being morally suspect, as Dawes does, is unwarranted. They may have rational reasons... for not doing so. Meanwhile, the first duty of clinical psychologists [such as Dawes] is towards their clients, to alleviate distress and to build up coping behaviour. There are other constituencies available through which they can if so inclined and acting as concerned citizens, make their views known on what they consider to be desirable political action. (ibid.)

Appealing to the *pathos* of a multiracial audience, Biesheuvel defends his position with the following disclaimer: “Let me emphasize that I share [Dawes’] views about apartheid as a mistaken policy, intolerable to blacks, reprehensible in its administration” (p. 4). And yet his meaning is clear: while Dawes and his supporters ride “the ideological bandwagon” and attain “moral self-satisfaction”, they lack an appreciation of the complexity of the political situation, neglect their primary duty to their patients and invoke without warrant the authority of clinical psychology to underwrite their claims. At least he – Biesheuvel – has “rational reasons” for his position. Constructing an argument about “what it is to do science” (Gross, 1990, p. 7), Biesheuvel makes extensive use of *stasis* theory. First, he poses the question of what actually exists (*an sit*). Since apartheid is epiphenomenal – “it is only a proximate cause” – the real issues are white prejudice, white fear and black “acculturation” processes resulting from “migrant labour policy” (Biesheuvel, 1987, p. 5). Second, because he queries the value of investigating the lives of whites under apartheid – white prejudice is incidentally racial and white fear is rational – the nature (*quid sit*) of white fear and prejudice is unimportant in comparison with the nature of black adjustment: “the trauma of the transition from a rural subsistence economy to an urban technological one, from a very effective network of kinship and social relations to what is still a disorganized, unstable community life in the cities” (ibid.). And third, the laws (*quale sit*) pertaining to black acculturation must be explicated accordingly: “... what is needed first of all is in-depth study of the numerous factors that influence [black] lives, the interaction of these factors and their susceptibility to intervention” (p. 6).

Like Albino (1983) before him, Biesheuvel cannot dissolve the universalist-relativist antinomy. Just as he affirms the transitoriness of psychological concepts he swears also by the unity of psychological science. By resorting to a discourse of *disciplinarity*, however, Biesheuvel invisibilizes white complicity in black suffering by redefining the purpose of psychological knowledge. Questioning the worth of „socially relevant’ science, Biesheuvel closes with the words of Vannevar Bush:

„Science has a simple faith which transcends utility... It is the faith that it is the privilege of Man to learn to understand, that this is his mission. If we abandon this mission under stress, we shall abandon it forever, for stress will not cease. Knowledge for the sake of understanding, not merely to prevail, that is the essence of our being... For if we fail to struggle and fail to think beyond our petty lot, we accept a sordid role. The light of our minds tells us that there is more to life than that.’ I share these sentiments. (1987, p. 7)

Similar to the English-speaking psychologists of the 1950s – which included himself – Biesheuvel’s concern is with the scope of the discipline. In asserting variously that the scientific method “should be value free” (p. 3), that social scientists must “be clearly aware how and where values and ideology can legitimately enter in scientific endeavour, how and where they cannot” (ibid.), and that “it is wrong to use the prestige attaching to the clinical psychological profession to speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise (p. 6), Biesheuvel reveals his preoccupation with the limits of psychological science and practice. But despite his seeming conservatism, Biesheuvel remains the first speaker since PIRSA’s early years to initiate a frank discussion on the subject of apartheid itself. For all his customary outspokenness, Strümpfer (1981), for one, never mentions the „A’-word. And yet, because he summonsed science to justify a politics of neutrality, Biesheuvel’s intellectual forthrightness would not avail him in the courtroom of his peers (Cooper et al., 1990).

OPENING ADDRESS, 1986 (L. VOGELMAN – OASSSA)

In 1982, SAPA and PIRSA buried their hatchet to form PASA. For progressive psychologists, however, the reunion meant nothing for the political direction of the discipline. Matters came to a head soon enough with the 1983 hosting of an international family therapy conference at Sun City – a gambling and entertainment center in a Bantustan “setting which is responsible for the break-up of thousands of [black] families” (Vogelman, 1987, p. 24). Appalled at what they considered a questionable display of judgment, disaffected mental health professionals and students formed the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) and committed themselves “to work only with those who are the victims of oppression” (Anonymous, n.d., p. 2).

In 1986, the OASSSA chairperson, Lloyd Vogelmann, opened the association's first national conference. In his address – *Apartheid and Mental Health* – he reminds his audience:

Our gathering today is more than an act of protest, it is more than an acknowledgement that apartheid and ill-health are inseparable and indivisible. This conference is a beginning of trying to discover what appropriate social services are (and are not). (1986, p. 3)

In this passage, Vogelmann makes rhetorical use of a scheme of repetition known as *anaphora*, the presence of which is always deliberate (Corbett & Connors, 1999). The repetition of the words "... it is more than" creates a rhythm between successive clauses that produces a powerful emotional effect. Vogelmann, already, has broken the mold of Biesheuvel's (1987) dispassionate scientist. He states unequivocally: "We are not a neutral organisation. We identify with the forces of progress rather than reaction and we are thus vigorously opposed to apartheid and to the oppression and exploitation that go with it" (Vogelmann, 1986, p. 3). His position – "In order to make South Africans more psychologically healthy and to resolve crises of mental health, we need to engage in politics" (ibid.) – is consistent with that of Dawes (1985) who is himself an OASSSA member.

For most of his address, Vogelmann drives home his point that apartheid policy in all its manifestations – high unemployment, low wages, forced removals, skewed mental health services and low welfare grants and pension payments – is a major contributor towards poor mental health outcomes among the black majority. In further contrast to Biesheuvel (1987), he criticizes both community psychologists – "[T]hey accept the status quo. Their activities help people to live in surroundings of crisis" (Vogelmann, 1986, p. 9) – as well as cross-cultural psychologists for downplaying the significance of class. He concludes that

[t]he challenge now is [for] all democratic social service workers to strengthen their position with the democratic movement for change. And it is the duty of all those committed to a free and democratic future in South Africa to rise to meet this challenge. (p. 11)

Although Vogelmann's concerns rest exclusively with professional matters, he is not a proponent of the professionalist discourse favored by Langenhoven (1978) and Gerdes (1979) for whom the consolidation and expansion of the profession are prime considerations in their own rights. Vogelmann is opposed to what he terms the "commercialisation" (1986, p. 4) and, by extension, urbanization of mental health services that proceed on the mistaken premise that "mental health is an individual matter" (ibid.). He devotes himself, rather, to the view that the provision of mental health services is a political affair: with talk of "exploitation" (p. 3), "ideology" (p. 4), "class" (p. 10) and "collective power" (p. 11) preponderating,

Vogelman promotes a *liberationist* discourse in the struggle for an inclusive, politically engaged and therefore „socially relevant’ profession.¹²¹

OPENING ADDRESS, 1987 (J. COOVADIA – OASSSA)

Jerry Coovadia, professor of pediatrics at the University of Natal, picks up where Vogelmann leaves off. He notes in an example of manifest intertextuality that “[t]he damaging effects of apartheid on mental health have been documented most elegantly by Vogelmann... among others. They need not be repeated here except in the broadest of terms” (Coovadia, 1987, p. 23).¹²² Titling his talk, *Social Service Professionals as Agents of Structural Change in South Africa*, Coovadia relies on four different schemes of repetition in the first page of his address – a feature of emotionally evocative prose (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Like Vogelmann, Coovadia makes use of *anaphora*: “These people-based organisations are the most visible evidence of the unyielding will of South Africans of all races and colours, all sexes and creeds, to achieve freedom and democracy” (Coovadia, 1987, p. 1). He follows this up with an instance of *epistrophe*, which occurs when the same group of words is repeated at the ends of consecutive clauses): “In these organisations no formulations are accepted without reason, nor any model rejected without cause” (ibid.). Immediately thereafter, *anadiplosis* is deployed in which the same word that ends one clause is used to start the following clause: “The struggle for liberty is thereby transformed from being only a means to an end, to being an end in itself” (ibid.). And, finally, Coovadia employs a device known as *epanalepsis* by using the same word to open and close a single clause: “In the peculiar symmetry of South African politics, an extra-parliamentary President is being opposed by extra-parliamentary organisations of the people” (ibid.).

Coovadia constructs a detailed argument in favor of the involvement of professionals in the mass struggle for democracy. First, professional organizations “have in the perception of both the people of this country and beyond, been seen to be too closely allied to the ideology and practices of the apartheid state and are therefore irrelevant to people’s needs”

¹²¹ It would be something of an overinterpretation to cite the rhetoric of Vogelmann and subsequent OASSSA speakers as instances of Marxist discourse. While OASSSA addresses abound with Marxist terminology, it cannot be claimed that the organization was Marxist in any programmatic sense.

¹²² Unlike Biesheuvel (1987), neither Vogelmann (1986) nor Coovadia deem it necessary to launch a multi-pronged investigation into black impoverishment – the deleterious impact of apartheid policy is obvious. In the words of their colleague, Dawes, who was reflecting on the scientific credentials of his paper: “There are no figures quoting mental health / ill health statistics in this article, which would have added a certain scientific respectability to my argument. I maintain that to argue that my reasoning is suspect until such figures are presented, is similar to suggesting that because we do not have stress data on concentration camp victims in the Boer War this experience was not psychologically destructive. The events speak for themselves...” (1985, p. 60).

(p. 15). Second, the capitalist hegemony creates contradictions for people of all classes. Third, institutionalized racism is offensive to the sensibilities of all people, the “petit bourgeois... as much as the urban and rural proletariat” (p. 17). Fourth, a victory is needed “not only with regard to the state... but of civil society too” (p. 18). Fifth, in the majority of twentieth century revolutions, success has depended on “the collective action of all classes” (p. 19). And sixth, it is the personal responsibility of social service professionals to cultivate deliberately egalitarian relationships with laypeople.

Akin to Vogelmann, Coovadia emphasizes the political aspects of mental health service provision, the avoidance of which translates into „socially irrelevant’ practice. Coovadia, however, draws on *liberationist* discourse to an even greater extent with an assortment of references to ideology, class, exploitation, “bourgeoisie” (p. 19), “proletariat” (p. 17), “state apparatus” (p. 14), “the people” (p. 18) and “false leaders” (p. 24). He appears, also, to disagree with Vogelmann regarding the political effectiveness of the community psychology movement: Coovadia makes positive reference to “empowering people” (p. 14), “primary health care” (p. 28), “promotion” (p. 29) and “the optimum guiding of life for every citizen” (p. 30).

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 1988 (B. NZIMANDE – OASSSA)

Speaking about *African Life and the „Hidden Abode’ of Mental Health: Some Unasked Questions about „Tradition’ and Progressive Social Services in South Africa*, Bonginkosi „Blade’ Nzimande contradicts Vogelmann (1986) and Coovadia (1987) on a pivotal doctrinal point. Despite being comfortable with Marxist terminology – Nzimande refers to “bourgeois scholarship and practice” (1988, p. 77), “subjective interpellations” (p. 82) and “ideological carry-overs” (p. 83) – he questions what he regards as OASSSA’s oversimplified theorization of the relationship between racial capitalism and mental health. For Nzimande, “left wing theoretical discourses on mental health... have been argued in a rather rhetorical way, without being concretely linked to a theory of mental health practice” (p. 82) – hence, “the very choice of the topic I will address you on tonight is partly a function of trying to go beyond rhetoric” (p. 76). The result of OASSSA’s reductionism “is the absence of a dialogue with the traditional practices” (p. 82) in relation to which the majority of Africans have made “ontological commitments” (pp. 80, 83) that “transcend historical conjunctures” (p. 83). Alert to the triple-threat of paternalism, romanticism and professional elitism, Nzimande urges OASSSA members to ask themselves whether “our openness in working with the oppressed

communities go[es] as far as to be prepared to incorporate these traditional conceptions of madness as part of the emerging progressive social services” (ibid.).

Nzimande’s comment on the ‘rhetoric’ – and poverty – of left-wing theories of mental illness is ironic. An industrial psychologist like Biesheuvel, his remark does not differ much from the latter’s caustic appraisal of left-leaning psychologists as drivers of an “ideological bandwagon [who] speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise” (Biesheuvel, 1987, p. 6). Doubtless, Nzimande – like Albino (1983) – is dissatisfied with the lack of ‘cultural relevance’ in the discipline. But his disagreement with what has become OASSSA canon also lets slip, arguably, progressive psychology’s most crippling philosophical rupture. Moreover, Nzimande’s suggestion that it is possible ‘to go beyond rhetoric’ reads like scientism – which is not only politically conservative (Vogelman, 1986) but antithetical to his special focus on culture.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1989 (D.J.W. STRÜMPFER – PASA)

Then chairman of the Professional Board for Psychology, Strümpfer sets the scene for his address by commenting on the rise of systems thinking, informing his audience that he “would like to touch upon some areas where there is a great need for working together within and between systems” (1989, p. 1). Noting the poor relationship that exists between PASA and the Professional Board, he chastises the former for its passivity and for setting up the Board “as a convenient straw man from whom all blessings are expected to flow and then to be attacked and vilified if the blessings do not flow” (p. 2). He warns, also, that frayed relations between English- and Afrikaans-speakers within PASA risk the possibility that “the system of psychology will break into two again, with worse consequences than those of our nearly two decades of shame before PASA came about” (p. 3). Strümpfer criticizes his white colleagues for acting either like Afrikaners of the Great Trek or English imperialists who dream of other colonies, saying, “When the others don’t want to play my game, I’ll take my marbles and go play elsewhere” (ibid.). He censures PASA for “behav[ing] as if it is a whites-only association” (ibid.), for failing to encourage dialogue between its constituent subdisciplines, for not doing enough to reach “an amicable understanding” with OASSSA “radicals” (p. 4), and for failing to appreciate the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration. Similar to Rademeyer (1982), his plea is for the discipline to apply its knowledge of systemic processes in order to heal its own fractiousness.

Strümpfer sounds like a father rebuking his squabbling children. Indeed, when he eventually turns his focus to resolving the aforementioned problems, he concedes: “I have no

easy recipes or quick-fix solutions to offer... you chose a person with the wrong colour of hair for that” (p. 5). Here and at various other points in his speech, he underplays his reputation as one of the country’s leading psychologists. He begins his speech, for instance, by saying, “I cannot really speak on behalf of the Professional Board.... I would now prefer just to be a „bare-head’ psychologist, wearing no hat” (p. 1), while he concludes with the words,

I want to close with a moral appeal, rather than further psychological ones: If you are religious, pray the ancient prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: „Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.’ If you are not religious, try to think of yourself as an instrument of peace – it is likely to turn into a self-fulfilling prophesy. (p. 6).

Strümpfer is effecting what psychotherapists term „the use of the self”: he is using *his* self, throwing into relief the shared humanity of speaker and audience. Stripping himself of titles and expertise, his chief means of persuasion (*pisteis*) is to present himself as a reasonable man, “a person of sound sense (*phronēsis*), high moral character (*aretē*), and benevolence (*eunoia*)” (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 72). Strümpfer’s use of an ethical appeal is especially well-suited for the deliberative oratorical genre, which seeks to “establish future policy” on contentious matters (Gross, 1990, p. 10).

Strümpfer departs significantly from his 1980 address in which he engaged more readily with the social challenges of the day. Now, nine years later and at the height of resistance to apartheid rule, the dissident Afrikaner restricts himself to an appraisal of internal party politics. By way of comparison, Albino’s (1983) cultural relativism reads tamely, too, when one considers the progressive role he played in the 1950s’ debate about mixed-„race’ membership. It is as if PASA reformists – in keeping with Biesheuvel’s (1987) vision of an apolitical discipline – are succumbing to an increasingly blinkered existence. Although he advances neither a discourse of disciplinarity nor one of professionalism, Strümpfer, while taking issue with the association’s creeping insularity, remains a „subject’ of PASA’s order of discourse.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 1991 (L.C. GERDES – PASA)

In her address – *Impressions and Questions about Psychology and Psychologists* – Lily Gerdes expresses the view that South African psychology “is at present grappling with problems of identity which suggest that it has reached adolescence and is moving toward maturity” (1992, p. 39). She believes that psychology is internally fragmented and that – in agreement with Strümpfer (1989) – it has isolated itself from other disciplines. What follows is an imbalance

between three basic assumptions, which address the generality/specificity issue. Stated briefly they are: (i) That in some respects all people are alike, thus recognizing their common humanity; (ii) That in some respects certain people are alike, thus recognizing differences between groups, such as age, ethnic, sex, educational level, and ethnic groups; (iii) That in some respects every individual is unique. Imbalance results if any one of these assumptions is stressed at the expense of the others. (Gerdes, 1992, p. 40)

Gerdes notes that “[i]n South Africa different political groupings and ideologies may partly be understood in terms of where they place the emphasis. Concerning the future the ultimate challenge to planners is to strike a balance between these three assumptions” (ibid.). Contradicting Vogelmann (1986) and Coovadia (1987), she points out, for example, that one should keep an open mind when considering the psychological health of black children raised under difficult living conditions, as “the predominantly negative models of black South African childhood... could result in a serious underestimation of potential of black children” (1992, p. 40).

Gerdes continues that since “psychology lacks integration and balance it must inevitably experience difficulties with the projection of its image” (ibid.). Wondering if it is at all possible “to formulate some kind of corporate image of the discipline as a whole” (ibid.), she devises a “mission statement” (p. 41) for the discipline that includes, *inter alia*, the pursuit and application of knowledge vis-à-vis human problems, the promotion of individual and communal psychological development, future planning regarding people’s psychological needs, and adherence to a code of conduct. Gerdes recommends media involvement – on ethical grounds – in the dissemination of information regarding important developments in the discipline, facilitating thereby the mental health of communities. Besides, “psychologists as agents of change need to combine the role of psychologist and that of public spirited citizen” (ibid.). Recognizing the distinction between “advertising personal services and heightening public awareness” (p. 42), Gerdes thinks “[p]sychology needs to strive for more recognition of its actual and potential contribution. To this end it has to become more active and pro-active, especially in regard to future planning and the wider application of its knowledge and skills” (ibid.).

As in her 1979 presidential address, Gerdes advocates ‘social relevance’ by lobbying for a closer relationship between psychology and the public. Yet despite her recourse to such commonplaces as “the new South Africa” (p. 43) and “a better quality of life for all” (ibid.), her enduring political circumspection is evident – never more so than when she dubs the apartheid conundrum “the generality/specificity issue” (p. 40). For Gerdes, “balance” (ibid.) is preferable to choosing political sides, which runs the risk of “fragmentation” (ibid.). Matching Strümpfer (1981; 1989) in her elision of the ‘A’-word, she enjoys a discursive

affinity with Biesheuvel's (1987) politics of non-intervention. Gerdes places herself in the service of a discourse of *disciplinarity* in which the "subject's diversity" (1992, p. 39), the "artificial dichotomy" between theory and application (ibid.), "consultation between persons from different fields within the discipline" (p. 40) and a mission statement that "states psychology's aims" (p. 41) are dominant concerns.

OPENING ADDRESS, 1993 (D.J.W. STRÜMPFER – PASA)

In *A Personal History of Psychology in South Africa*,¹²³ Strümpfer apologizes for talking politics – "My brief was specifically not to repeat the history of psychology associations in this country" (1993, p. 3) – but states that he does not want to speak about "politics in the ordinary sense" (ibid.). Noting that Afrikaans universities were – for the most part – apartheid strongholds, he recalls how psychology at these institutions "was characterized by a strong service orientation" (p. 7). English departments of psychology, by contrast, focused on basic psychology: "There was a certain ambivalence towards application, with clinical psychology for some time the only significant exception" (p. 8). Strümpfer claims that "the call for „relevance”" (p. 8) originated at these Anglophone universities, albeit "with a strong element of „political correctness”" (pp. 8-9).

Strümpfer then observes how, over the course of his forty-seven years in the discipline, the research process has changed in three respects: computerization of literature searches and data analysis, an increase in the use of qualitative methods – which "seem more appropriate than ever, since it results in theories that are grounded in the experience of the people" (p. 17) – and a paradigm shift towards general systems theory. Apropos of the profession, it was political events – the assassination of then Prime Minister Verwoerd and ministerial inquiries into the Wilgespruit sensitivity training programs and scientology – that accelerated the drive towards statutory recognition, with efforts by PIRSA especially prominent.

Strümpfer is reluctant to condemn the founders of South African psychology for having, "in many ways, overtly and covertly, consciously and unconsciously, perhaps actively perhaps reluctantly, but mostly by doing nothing or too little, accepted and condoned much of the apartheid policy" (p. 31). Aware of the dangers of "retrospective history" (Gould, 1988, p. 27 quoted ibid., p. 29), he cautions that "it is very easy to be liberal-minded when one's whole milieu is one of liberalism" (p. 5). Still, he admits that "we too have to confess our guilt, repent with utmost sincerity, ask for forgiveness and then make atonement

¹²³ I am thankful to Professor Lionel Nicholas for mailing me a copy of this address.

by working, as scientists and professionals, as hard as we can at a new, better future for all” (p. 32) – and commits himself thereupon to creating “a more socially liberatory discipline” (Hayes, 1993, n.p. quoted *ibid.*, p. 32). As for the present lack of an African psychology, it must be remembered that, first, the discipline originated in Europe; second, apartheid¹²⁴ policy shaped the development of South African psychology; and third, prior to the rise of African nationalism, “there could only have been a pseudo-African psychology if whites had tried to set their minds to it” (p. 31) – as it was, they did the best they could. Turning to a religious vernacular of ‘confession’, ‘repentance’, ‘forgiveness’ and ‘atonement’, Strümpfer anoints a discourse of *salvation* in which psychologists are urged to reconcile themselves with their past. The ensuing construction of a ‘socially relevant’ psychology that is simultaneously ‘Afrocentric’ and ‘socially liberatory’ becomes a redemptive act through which the discipline earns the right to belong in “a new South Africa” (p. 33).

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1993 (B. VAN DER WESTHUYSEN – PASA)

By the time of his address, Bodley van der Westhuyssen knows that PASA will soon be dissolved.¹²⁵ Conscious of being its last president, he surpasses Strümpfer (1993) in the use of religious images and clauses. Philosophizing about how, “[t]o my mind people are better judged by their deeds than by their words”, he affirms that change brings with it “the opportunity to take stock” (van der Westhuyssen, 1993, p. 3). Meditating on “leaps of faith” (p. 2), he quotes at length from William James’ *The Will to Believe*, in-between references to “uncertainty” (p. 1), “dangers” (p. 2) and “choice” (*ibid.*). Conjuring up phantasmagorias of Death and The Reckoning, van der Westhuyssen laments how “[w]e as individuals are of no importance. We will eventually all cross the bridge to the other side and soon be forgotten” (pp. 2-3). Yet all is not lost as he testifies to the one thing that will outlast them all: “psychology will live on” (p. 3). What matters is that psychologists ensure the discipline’s “right of existence [which] lies in the impact, the effect it has as a science and a profession, when the community out there experiences psychology as meaningful and of value” (p. 2). In the manner of Strümpfer (1993), van der Westhuyssen rallies the audience around the discourse of *salvation*. He may not speak the language of reconciliation – he never mentions the imminent demise of the apartheid project – but, like Strümpfer, he assures his colleagues

¹²⁴ By the time Strümpfer uses the ‘A’-word (p. 31), his focus is shifting already to the future. In addresses delivered during the apartheid era, almost all white psychologists jettisoned the word. Now, in the regime’s final months, it is admitted shortly before its consignment to the dustbin of political experiments gone wrong.

¹²⁵ I am grateful to Professor van der Westhuyssen for sending me a copy of his address.

that psychology has not come to the end of the road. Despite PASA's approaching end, they can yet embrace a new associational life and bind themselves to a disciplinary project of „social relevance’.

DISCUSSION

When he came to power in 1978, Prime Minister P.W. Botha knew that the dream of Verwoerdian apartheid was no longer feasible. The black population explosion, the refusal of three homelands to accept independence, the rise of Marxist rule in Mozambique, the growing despondency among Afrikaner intellectuals and the emergence of an Afrikaner bourgeoisie – all militated against a literal reading of the apartheid vision (P. E. Louw, 2004). “We are moving into a changing world, we must adapt otherwise we shall die”, Botha is alleged to have said, although he would deny having uttered these exact words (Lipton, 1986, p. 51 quoted in Giliomee, 2003, p. 586). Promising a slew of apartheid reforms, the pragmatic Botha met with shrill resistance from *verkramptes* for whom the means never justified the ends (D. O'Meara, 1996). But given his four-decade-long apprenticeship honing a prodigious managerial acumen, he was unwilling to continue with policies that had ceased to work.

Already while Minister of Defense, Botha had devised the beginnings of a plan for reforming apartheid in order to reverse the NP's mounting isolation. Soon enough, upon ascending to the highest office in the land, he was able to give effect to his ideas. Alienating NP politicians by recruiting to his inner circle a team of technocrats – senior military officers, high-ranking civil servants, academics and captains of industry – Botha and his reformers drew on a blend of Arend Lijphart's *consociational democracy*, Samuel Huntington's *enlightened despotism* and Andre Beaufre's *total strategy*. What followed was “government by technocratic professionals” (P. E. Louw, 2004, p. 94). While the details of this highly coordinated response to a surmised Muscovite „total onslaught’ are not of concern here, the discursive logic of the South African state during this period, is.

Between 1978 and 1983, a “new language of legitimation” started to emerge in official state discourse (Posel, 1987, p. 419). The ideological fidelity of the years of Verwoerdian orthodoxy gave way to a supposedly apolitical discourse of „effectiveness’ that was built on notions of “technocratic rationality, „total strategy’ and „free enterprise” (ibid., p. 420). Pragmatic government was required to respond to „reality’: reform had nothing to do with ideology and everything to do with the „objective’ resolution of technical problems by qualified „experts’. As for the „fact’ of „total onslaught’, a „total strategy’ was needed to repel the threat of communism, which was to be accomplished via the appropriate combination of

objective military expertise and free-market economics (the latter's benefits would make communism less attractive to the black population). The business sector became wedded to the state, which, depending on the „factual’ contingencies of the moment, ended up regulating the market as it saw fit. Capitalism was justified no longer by appeals to liberal ethics – it was warranted on practical grounds alone. Meanwhile, the net effect of depoliticizing any given state intervention was to render it incontestable.

O'Meara comments that “the discourse of Total Strategy... encouraged the spread of a new technocratic managerialism throughout the wider white South African society. Government, business, educational institutions, the media – seemingly the entire establishment – became infected by this craze for technocratic rationality” (1996, p. 269). Correspondingly, one observes the fall of ideology in SAPA, PIRSA and PASA addresses from the late seventies onwards.¹²⁶ Taking its place is a *professionalist* discourse in which political discussions are conspicuously absent (Gerdes, 1979; Langenhoven, 1978; Rademeyer, 1982), or, alternatively, a discourse of *disciplinarity* that interprets politics via the internal logic of the discipline (Biesheuvel, 1987; Gerdes, 1992; Raubenheimer, 1981). How this degree of political indifference can occur at a point in South African history described as “apartheid’s most brutal period”, is scarcely believable (P. E. Louw, 2004, p. 83). At a time when Steve Biko has just been killed, young white men are being forced into military service, the ANC is bombing SASOL installations, white professionals are starting to leave the country in droves, South Africa is under an arms embargo and the economy is in recession (Beck, 2000), not a single speaker is able to mention the word “apartheid” except for Biesheuvel in 1986. By then, tricameralism has failed,¹²⁷ rebellion in the townships has been brutally suppressed, hundreds of thousands of workers and students have embarked on a boycott campaign, disaffected comrades are „necklacing’ – burning alive – suspected collaborators and the country is now in the grip of a national state of emergency (P. E. Louw, 2004). In the meantime, SAPA/PIRSA/PASA talk of general systems theory (Gerdes, 1979; Rademeyer, 1982; Raubenheimer, 1981) – convinced of its suitability for the national situation – is articulated in technicist ways more befitting the theory’s cybernetic origins.

Strümpfer notes in an interview how “right from the start PASA was very much an Afrikaner organization” (Nell, 1993, p. 40). Complaining of a PIRSA takeover, former SAPA

¹²⁶ Although the diminishing incidence of political referents was evident in PIRSA addresses of the early and mid-seventies – the previous chapter traced this phenomenon to multiple crises within Afrikanerdom – the persistence of the trend has more to do with the staged death of politics in national (white) discourse.

¹²⁷ Botha attempted unsuccessfully to establish a tricameral parliament for whites, coloreds and Indians to the exclusion of black Africans.

members “simply felt they had had enough” (p. 39) and withdrew subsequently from active involvement in the amalgamated association. There was unhappiness about PIRSA not having been made to apologize for embracing apartheid dogma (Nell, 1993), the domination of the PASA executive by white Afrikaner men (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008) and the new association’s continued alignment with the repressive political dispensation of the day (J. Louw & Foster, 2004). It may be countered that the prominence of professionalist discourse in SAPA/PIRSA/PASA circles had less to do with their co-option by an increasingly technocratic state than with the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology in 1974. And yet their depoliticized order of discourse coincided with a decline in both scientific and political papers on ‘race’ in the SAJP – their official journal (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). The attempt to dispense with politics was not simply due to professionalizing forces inside the discipline or because of any particular desire to steer clear of troubled waters – rather, “P.W. Botha’s attempts at a policy of ‘non-racialism’ during the early 1980s may have... [made] a race focus seem irrelevant” (ibid., p. 211).

While PASA’s congresses continued – the SAJP’s publication of Dawes’ (1985) paper was dealt with by “scientific neutralists” (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008, p. 86) like Biesheuvel (1987) – those who had not been interpellated by professionalist discourse were marching to the beat of a different drum. OASSSA, a self-avowed “political organisation which... situates itself within the mass democratic movement, but operates from a nonaligned position” (Anonymous, n.d., p. 2), was pursuing a liberationist line. Both Vogelmann and Coovadia belonged to the United Democratic Front (A. Dawes, personal communication, December 21, 2012), a Charterist front for the banned African National Congress that meant “different things to different people” (P. E. Louw, 2004, p. 150). Founded in 1983 in opposition to Botha’s tricameral reforms, the non-racial coalition of hundreds of civic, women’s, youth and religious organizations (Beck, 2000) succeeded in “fudging its discourse” to generate a constituency spanning much of the political spectrum (P. E. Louw, 2004, p. 150). Vogelmann and Coovadia’s rhetoric, however, would have appealed to its leftist supporters. But when Blade Nzimande – also a UDF figure – refuted his comrades by placing culture ahead of class, the cracks were starting to appear. By the time of Nzimande’s address in September 1988, the UDF had been banned for six months and had ceded influence to a new coalition partner, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Nzimande’s culture-speak was not purely a criticism of OASSSA: it was an indictment of the UDF’s terminal inability to convince the black majority that it was more than an Indian and colored cabal.

PASA's engagement with the notion of a 'socially relevant' psychology varied across a series of politically conservative discourses. These included, first, a *professionalist* discourse that focused on consolidating the profession by servicing the needs of the South African public (Gerdes, 1979; Langenhoven, 1978; Rademeyer, 1982); second, a discourse of *disciplinarity*, which concentrated on fundamental questions rather than political ones that were rendered via the depoliticizing logic of the discipline (Biesheuvel, 1987; Gerdes, 1992; Raubenheimer, 1981); third, a *cultural* discourse that stressed the importance of producing psychological knowledge about black Africans (Albino, 1983); and fourth, a *salvation* discourse that understood the quest for 'social relevance' as a form of disciplinary rebirth (Strümpfer, 1993; van der Westhuysen, 1993). By contrast, OASSSA's appraisal of a 'socially relevant' discipline – which centered on the profession – was embedded in a *liberationist* discourse that stressed the negative consequences of apartheid policy on mental health and the attendant responsibility of social service workers to mobilize politically (Coovadia, 1987; Vogelmann, 1986). Consequently, there was no telling what would happen when, in 1994, PASA and OASSSA – not forgetting the Psychology and Apartheid Committee – disbanded to form the Psychological Society of South Africa.

CHAPTER 10: PSYSSA ADDRESSES (1996–2011)

PsySSA has already attained international accolades and we as members can be, rightfully, proud of our Society. (Patrick Sibaya, 2004)

And so, if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis. (Boyce Mkhize, 2007)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter analyzes addresses of the post-apartheid period and identifies two competing discourses. The first – a *market* discourse – advocates the development of a psychology that is financially rewarding, globally competitive and internationally recognized. Accordingly, „market relevance’ is sought in which teaching, research and community service outputs are graded according to international standards and priorities. The second discourse of *civic responsibility* casts South Africa’s traumatic past as unresolved and requiring, therefore, the intervention of psychologists. In this case, „social relevance’ is desired in order to bring about the emancipation of marginalized communities. On balance, however, it is the market discourse that pervades the discipline’s current discursive order. With the introduction of democratic rule, South Africa’s reentry into the international community resulted in far-reaching changes to the country’s political, economic and higher education landscapes, which had to adjust themselves to the demands of a globalized neo-liberal hegemony.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 1996 (T. H. VELDSMAN)

In his address – *Creating out of the Present the Future* – Theo Veldsman calls on “psychology to recontextualise its role... in order to (re)establish its moral, socio-political and scientific legitimacy within an emerging new order with its reconstituted stakeholders” (1996, p. 1). He structures his talk around the discipline’s response to this imperative by using “five key words: Forming; Bonding; Envisioning; Positioning; and Awaiting” (ibid.).

In terms of „Forming’, Veldsman notes “[t]he healthy growth in our membership of 14% over the past year” but adds that

[a]t best our financial position is tenuous and precarious. We ended the 1995/1996 financial year with a deficit of R38 500, a significant improvement relative to a projected deficit of R84 000. The estimated deficit for 1996/7 is R115 000. A working group was set up to investigate various financial scenarios for our Society. The group provided our EXCO with useful recommendations. For example, continuous education appears to be the most promising future source of income. (p. 2)

While it is not entirely unusual for Veldsman, as president, to reveal the state of the association's financial health, his reliance on phrases such as "healthy growth", "financial viability", "key stakeholders" and "financial scenarios" (ibid.) sounds more like the talk of a chief executive officer than a doctor of psychology. His employ of "key words" to organize his ideas, moreover, is consistent with information system-speak. Despite acknowledging, in the midst of these market tropes, PsySSA's obligation to address "the constraints of past injustices and discrimination" (ibid.), Veldsman's use of nominalizations and the term „constraint' – which is peculiar to mathematics, computer science and economics – adds to the business-like tone of his speech.

As for „Bonding', Veldsman notes that "[w]e as a helping profession ha[ve] to serve as a role model for reconciliation and healing in our country" (p. 3). He lists, accordingly, the different measures taken to address the "degrees of mistrust, suspicion, anger, guilt and/or apathy [that] are still hampering our bonding" (ibid.), which include regular briefs, newsletters, meetings and "our Society [going] electronic via e-mail and a location on the Worldwide Web" (ibid.). One observes again how technology-speak enters the realm of human interaction and is understood as facilitating interpersonal relationships.

Veldsman speaks of how PsySSA has been „Envisioning' the future by starting "a process of building a national agenda of mental health... against the backdrop of rectifying past injustices in our country and working through the associated traumas" (p. 4). He uses *anaphora* to appeal to his audience's *pathos*: "A vision energises, mobilises and inspires. Without a vision psychology will be adrift in our country. A widely shared vision also will build credibility for our Society" (ibid.). Here the suffering of South Africa's oppressed communities works in the service of a broader goal, namely, the consolidation of the newly formed society's legitimacy.

In terms of the suitable „Positioning' of the discipline "in the transforming context" (ibid.), Veldsman mentions the importance of "finding our place under the sun" (ibid.). The "context" is not only about restoration and reconciliation, but is also about securing PsySSA's vital interests. Veldsman speaks variously of "vertical" and "horizontal" relationships (ibid.), "policy engagement" (p. 5), "service delivery" (ibid.), "value adding working relationships" (ibid.) and "improvement in tariffs" (ibid.) – all indicators of business-model thinking.

Last of all, Veldsman identifies „Awaiting' priorities, which are mostly restatements of „Positioning' priorities. He mentions "our clients" (p. 6) and "ourselves as service

providers” (ibid.) – more business terms – and the need to find “the appropriate balance [between] looking after our own interests and satisfying the needs of those we have to serve” (p. 7). Veldsman adds that “[t]he thrust should be wealth through and for the people of our country” (p. 6), before concluding as follows:

I put my vision for our Society before you: a fully representative, credible and legitimate organisation; a Society which is problem driven, relevant and involved where it matters; a Society which makes a difference; an open and diverse, but also unified Society; an organisation which is innovative, responsive and flexible; a society which empowers and enables its members; and finally a Society which is financially sound. (p. 8)

Although the PsySSA president expresses a commitment to pursuing a „socially relevant’ psychology, he does so by invoking a *market* rationality – and to an extent hitherto unseen in South African psychology’s associational life. Unlike his predecessors’ commercialist forays that were merely exploratory – for example, Gerdes’ musings about a “corporate image of the discipline” (1992, p. 40) – Veldsman’s are thoroughgoing. Whereas, previously, talk of „relevance’ centered around the resolution of national problems (Pratt-Yule, 1953), Afrikaner survivalism (la Grange, 1962, 1966; Robbertse, 1967, 1969), cultural difference (Albino, 1983; Nzimande, 1988), the relationship between apartheid and mental health (Biesheuvel, 1987; Coovadia, 1987; Vogelmann, 1986), and disciplinary redemption (Strümpfer, 1993; van der Westhuysen, 1993), in the post-apartheid era it is taking on another meaning altogether.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 2000 (S. MKHATSHWA)

Father Smangaliso Mkhathswa, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Education, claims that “[p]sychology has a vital role to play in assisting government to understand the forces at play in our national psyche or, as the case may be, individual and group psyches” (2000, p. 1). He asserts that social and mental problems “negatively impact... on our ability as a country to compete in an increasingly globally-competitive environment” (ibid.) – hence the need for psychologists to “assist with the healing of people whose lived reality, even to this day, bears testimony to the psychological and other ravages of a brutal past” (ibid.). Yet he suggests that psychologists are indifferent to the psychological violence of the apartheid era: “Six years after our liberation, what are psychologists doing about minds and consciousnesses disfigured by our bloody past? I ask you” (ibid.). In this impassioned appeal, Mkhathswa uses *erotema* – the rhetorical question – to challenge his audience and advance a claim by insinuation (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Additionally, by phrasing the accusation of political apathy as a question, he not only makes it difficult for his listeners to contradict him

but may succeed, also, in being more persuasive than if he were to have made his assertion directly (ibid.).

Mkhatshwa requests his audience “to locate these issues and challenges within the broader thrust of the African Renaissance” (2000, p. 3). Asking whether psychological practice is “purely universal” (ibid.) or culturally relative, he puts it to his listeners: “You are the experts. Give us the answers” (ibid.). Mkhatshwa’s use of the pronoun “us” implies an „us-them’ opposition and a (widening) gap between psychology and the people it is meant to serve. This is because South African psychology’s reliance on “theoretical and empirical underpinnings that are Western in nature” undermines its capacity for generating “solutions that are uniquely suited to our context” (ibid.). He expresses, therefore, “[t]he need for a more Afrocentric approach to knowledge production... [that] could provide a more meaningful basis for the development of appropriate and relevant strategies and approaches” (ibid.). After all, “[m]y own view would be that, with regard to the general production of knowledge, there is an increasing need to locate social science research and discourse firmly within a contextual culture-centred perspective” (ibid.). Committed to an Afrocentric approach, Mkhatshwa knows that culture has become a buzzword in the global academy.

Stressing the need for „culturally relevant’ research and practice, Mkhatshwa continues in the discursive tradition of Albino (1983) and Nzimande (1988). His position is also consistent with OASSSA’s concerning the pernicious effects of apartheid policy on psychological health (Coovadia, 1987; Vogelmann, 1986). Where he differs from these speakers, however, is in his recognition of an *international* audience – that „increasingly globally-competitive environment’ in which mental illness is an efficiency handicap and cultural sensitivity is *de rigueur*. In this respect, Mkhatshwa resembles Veldsman, who references on several occasions “the official acceptance of PsySSA into the international community... [which] can serve as leverage¹²⁸ to form value adding¹²⁹ working relationships with other national Associations/Societies” (1996, p. 5). Mkhatshwa’s entreaties about „cultural relevance’ are constrained by the nascent *market* discourse.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 2001 (K. ASMAL)

Kader Asmal, law professor and Minister of Education, shares Mkhatshwa’s sentiment when he says, “I have no doubt that psychology has a vital role to play in the healing of our people and in dealing with the psychological scars wrought by apartheid” (2001, p. 1). He wonders,

¹²⁸ ‘Leverage’ is originally a physics term that was taken up subsequently by finance.

¹²⁹ ‘Value-added’ is a term borrowed from economics.

however, why it is that the general public is more inclined to turn to pop psychology – including “sangomas” (ibid.)¹³⁰ – than to “psychology in its scientific and professional form” (ibid.). He, too, resorts to *anaphora* and *erotema* in an emotionally charged series of questions:

What are you doing as a profession... to heal the burdens of the past...? What are you doing to help the security monsters bred by apartheid and who continue to live in our midst, to come to terms with their past and to ensure that they do not return to their evil ways? What are you doing to address the recurring resort to violence at the slightest provocation...? ... What are you doing to address the violence against women and children? What are you doing to address the scourge of HIV/AIDS and alcohol and drug abuse? (ibid.)

Perhaps aware of the affront he may have caused, Asmal appears to backpedal, though he is actually using a disclaimer: “I am not suggesting that the Psychological Society is not seized with these issues” (ibid.). His larger point is that “the profession requires locating the issues within a new knowledge and education and training paradigm that is firmly located in the context and reality of South Africa as a developing African country” (pp. 1, 4). For Asmal, the creation of such a paradigm entails, *inter alia*, training greater numbers of African psychologists in a profession that “is still more than 90% white” (p. 4); ensuring that trainee psychologists become proficient in at least one indigenous African language (“for the psychological profession to become truly relevant, language barriers need to be addressed” (ibid.)); equipping professionals for work in primary health care settings “to ensure relevancy” (ibid.); and providing incentives that will reverse the “brain drain” (ibid.) of South African psychologists to “developed nations” (ibid.). The bottom line is to “ensure that all our people are provided with appropriate, accessible and affordable psychological services” (ibid.).

Although Asmal advocates the transformation of the discipline in ways that will increase its sensitivity to “lived realities” (ibid.) in South Africa, he places sangomas in the same company as “tarot cards... tea leaves... palm readings... and soap operas” (p. 1), parting company with Albino (1983), Nzimande (1988) and his former deputy Mkhathshwa (2000). Like Veldsman (1996) and Mkhathshwa, however, Asmal is cognizant of the international community, indicating that “developing” countries must be able to compete with “developed” ones (2001, p. 4). He is fluent, consequently, in *market* discourse, as suggested

¹³⁰ A *sangoma* is a South African traditional healer for whom the supernatural world plays an important part in the etiology and treatment of illnesses.

by his references to “meeting targets”, the “shortage of skilled personnel”, “not having invested in their development” and the “free flow of human capital” (ibid.).¹³¹

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 2002 (S. BADAT)

For the third year running, a high-profile education official is invited to deliver PsySSA’s keynote address. In *Challenges of a Changing Higher Education and Social Landscape in South Africa*, Saleem Badat, education professor and chief executive officer of the Council on Higher Education, speaks about Kader Asmal’s sweeping proposals for the reconstruction of the country’s higher education system.¹³² Badat sets himself the immediate objective of recounting “the ‘real past’ since amnesia... seems to be becoming a serious affliction of some of our fellow South Africans” (2002, p. 3). Towards this end, he details how apartheid policy created educational imbalances that persist into the present at a juncture “that has witnessed the emergence of a global economy and changes in the world that have been captured by the concept ‘globalisation’” (p. 4). For Badat, globalization myths are legion: he disputes Fukuyama’s death-of-history thesis, declaring instead that what “is purveyed by eloquent intellectuals... as ‘common sense’ is actually highly ideological, the ideology of neo-liberalism which is the dominant ideological current of the era of globalisation” (ibid.). On the other hand, he acknowledges that “[g]lobalisation is a reality and [there is no] question of escaping it. The challenge for higher education,” he believes, “is to produce the knowledge and personpower that will enable South Africa to engage proactively, critically and creatively with globalisation” (ibid.). The inescapable truth, however, is that “economic reconstruction”, “political democratisation” and “redistributive social policies” (Higher Education White Paper, 1997 quoted ibid.) are incompatible with neo-liberal thinking.

Badat identifies “the great danger of a rampant and profane marketisation and commodification of higher education” (2002, p. 10), which may lead to the humanities and social sciences being “sacrificed at the altar of ‘market relevance’ and ‘market needs’” (p. 6). The rise of private higher education institutions means “the traditional unity of teaching, research and service is fragmenting” (ibid.). He beseeches his listeners to ensure that students “are not reduced to ‘clients’ and ‘customers’ but are embraced as real partners in higher learning” (p. 9), imploring them “to hold tight to the moral basis of higher education” (p. 10).

¹³¹ On another note, Asmal borrows liberally from Mkhathshwa’s speech – some passages, more than a hundred words in length, are verbatim copies – without acknowledging his source. It is more than likely that Mkhathshwa and Asmal have the same speechwriter – although one wonders about the seeming routinization of PsySSA congresses.

¹³² I am grateful to Professor Badat for sending me a copy of his address.

Like Asmal (2001) before him, Badat uses *anaphora* and *erotema*, forcing his audience to ask of the discipline whether it “produce[s] men and women that, to put it idealistically, personify good” (2002, p. 10). At the end of a series of searching “what” questions, he asks:

Are we producing excellent technicians and technocrats, or excellent technicians and technocrats and simultaneously enlightened and critical South African and African citizens? Put in another way, what discourse of social responsiveness prevails in the departments of psychology today? Is it a notion of „social responsiveness that is thinned down and reduced to that of market responsiveness and the needs of being economically productive alone, emptied of all content except for that which advances individual or organisational economic competitiveness’? (p. 11, original emphasis)¹³³

Badat’s verdict is that the “evidence seems to suggest that we are not” producing graduates who will “engage with the ideologies of neo-liberalism and privatisation, the privileging of private benefits above public good and the attitude of „greed is cool’ and „get what you can and screw the rest”” (pp. 12-13). He rejects the “rhetoric of the „rainbow nation”” (p. 13) and culturally exclusivist formulations of the African Renaissance. Returning to the devices of *anaphora* and *erotema*, he concludes that “our responsibility”

as professional psychologists [is that] we must be able to respond, heads held high if asked: ... Where is the intellectual critique of globalisation and its effects...? ... Where is the intellectual engagement with the imperative of equity and redress...? ... Where is the intellectual vision? And where, above all, is the intellectual contribution to the development of an equitable, just and humane society? (p. 15, original emphases)

Badat is unique among his education colleagues in reflecting critically on the changing ethos of higher education. As a result, his address contains relatively few examples of market discourse and considerably more instances of Marxist signifiers, such as “ideology”, “bourgeoisie” and a glowing reference to Eric Hobsbawm. Yet Badat – in a testament to the insidiousness of business-speak – at one point advises against treating students as “clients”, only to suggest embracing them as “partners” (p. 9). The latter no less market-friendly, Badat’s slip is a reminder of how difficult it can be to escape hegemonic discursive configurations.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 2003 (M. TSEDU)

Whereas Mkhathshwa (2000) assumes the existence of a national psyche, the editor of the country’s largest weekly paper – *The Sunday Times* – asks whether, given “general acceptance that the two nations theory still applies”, such a psyche can be said to exist at all (Tsedu, 2003, p. 6). Speaking about *The Media and the Post-1994 South African National Psyche*, Mathatha Tsedu criticizes Desmond Tutu’s „rainbow nation’ metaphor – as Badat

¹³³ The quote in the latter half of this excerpt is from Singh (2001).

(2002) does – on the grounds that it obscures simmering interracial tensions in the country and “disempower[s] people from engaging with the challenges of the time” (2003, p. 6). For Tsedu, the national reality is one of greed, “a fiercely violent society” (ibid.), white superiority and black inferiority, and “[m]any people walk[ing] around carrying burdens of time past” (ibid.). He speaks of how black journalists frequently question themselves when it comes to reporting the indiscretions of black politicians for fear of “feeding the stereotype” (ibid.). Tsedu’s belief, however, is that “we should show you what is real. We should tell you the truth as far as is possible. Anything less would be a disservice” (ibid.). As with Mkhathshwa (2000) and Asmal (2001), Tsedu claims that the psychological wounds of the past have not been addressed. Like Badat (2002) for whom the ‘real past’ must not be forgotten, he insists that ‘the truth’ must out. At a discursive level, these speakers describe the continuing fragility of the national life and the *civic responsibility* of psychologists to respond accordingly.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 2004 (P.T. SIBAYA)

Despite having relatively little to say about the national situation, Patrick Sibaya’s views are considerably different.¹³⁴ He praises his audience, in fact, declaring that, “[b]y your gracious cooperation, commitment to transformation and support of membership, you have demonstrated to the South African population, and the world at large, that we are a united people” (2004, p. 2). Apart from one other sentence in which the president asks his listeners “to rededicate ourselves... to the nation of South Africa” (p. 3), the remainder of his address is given to organizational matters.

Prominent among Sibaya’s reflections is PsySSA’s international reputation. He cites “international accolades” (p. 1), the inspiration received from “contingents of international attendees” (ibid.) and the “world-class journal of psychology” (ibid.) published by the association. Proficient in *market* discourse, Sibaya speaks variously of “management teams” (p. 2), “foster[ing] productivity” (ibid.), “our core products” (p. 3), “the quality of services we offer” (ibid.) and a need for “quality assurance” (ibid.). Moreover, because “[p]sychology is a caring profession”, he reasons that “[w]e must care for one another, first.... Charity begins at home. Let us care for our fellow psychologists” (ibid.). Sibaya is concerned about “special interest groups” (p. 4) within the association “whose needs have been neglected for too long” (ibid.). Nonetheless, he maintains that “[t]aking a fellow psychologist to court, discredits our profession” (ibid.) and that “[t]hese divisions must align themselves with PsySSA and its

¹³⁴ I am thankful to Professor Sibaya for sending me a copy of his address.

constitution” (ibid.). He ends with an extended discussion of the “alarming” (p. 5) rate of transverse registration, which, if it “continues at the same rate, by the year 2010 almost everybody registered in South Africa will be a Clinical Psychologist!” (p. 6). For Sibaya, this state of affairs cannot be condoned because of the range of settings in which psychological services are needed and because practitioners “owe allegiance [to their specialties] by virtue of professional training and inclinations” (ibid.).

In stark contrast to previous years’ speakers, Sibaya makes no mention of the social context in which South African psychology is located. Then again, his preoccupation with the internal affairs of the association and its international standing – along with his adoption of market parlance – are consistent with the globalizing, commodifying trends that Badat (2002) identifies. With almost no evidence of a psychology beholden to the public, Sibaya’s address is emblematic of a new order of discourse in which post-apartheid psychology – no longer isolated from the worldwide discipline – must realign itself with a different set of priorities.

OPENING ADDRESS, 2007 (B. MKHIZE)

Advocate Boyce Mkhize, Registrar of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), begins his address by acknowledging the presence of international luminaries and governmental leaders in the audience, noting that “there are both global and local challenges confronting the profession today” (2007, p. 1).¹³⁵ On the international front, “fast-paced developments in the global scientific space” (p. 2) have raised important ethico-moral questions that “have a much more direct bearing on the profession of psychology than we realize” (ibid.). In addition, World Health Organization statistics reveal vast numbers of people suffering from mental disorders, a three-in-four treatment gap and a significant link between physical and psychological ill-health.

Closer to home, Mkhize raises questions about Sibaya’s (2004) „united people’ thesis. Aligning himself with the discourse of *civic responsibility*, he notes how, in relation to rising numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans, child-headed households and traumatized surviving spouses, “the most fundamental question is what the profession of psychology has done to position itself to address these mental health problems which are inextricably interwoven with our social challenges today” (B. Mkhize, 2007, p. 5). In a similar vein as Mkhathswa (2000) and Asmal (2001), Mkhize offers a damning assessment of the discipline:

This country has a bag full of apartheid wounds... No active follow-up was ever done to bring about true reconciliation and healing so that there would be closure to some of the gruesome

¹³⁵ I am grateful to Mr Qiniso Mthembu of the HPCSA for sending me a copy of Advocate Mkhize’s speech.

revelations that our nation was exposed to. And so, if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis. (2007, pp. 5-6)

The opposite of Sibaya (2004), Mkhize impresses upon his audience that “[i]n our quest to professionalize our input and interventions... I urge us to look beyond ourselves... without falling foul [of] our own web of narrow professional interests” (p. 7). With his assault on market discourse in full flow, Mkhize proceeds to lecture his listeners on the role psychology should be playing in society:

We want to see a discipline that is socially responsive as well as professionally and ethically astute. We want to see a discipline that is not so much inward looking than outward looking or put differently, a discipline with an inward glance but an outward focus. If in our deliberations we miss the discourse around the plight of the masses of our people and how this discipline ought to impact them in a positive way, I want to submit that we will be a discipline that may stand accused of existential irrelevance. (ibid.)

Although mindful of the discipline’s international profile, Mkhize is adamant that psychological research and practice in South Africa must attend to local issues first: “Our science and approach needs to be developed and adapted to our own local context while also [being] comparable to the world’s best” (ibid.). Akin to Badat (2002), he retains a critical stance on the new *market* discourse: professionalization of “our input”,¹³⁶ for example, must be subject to an ethic of social engagement.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS, 2010 (H. MKHIZE)

In her one-page address, psychologist and Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Hlengiwe Mkhize, expresses her pleasure at “the enormous strides made by psychology in this country” (2010, p. 1) – feedback she has received “from various quarters, nationally, internationally and from my colleagues in government” (ibid.).¹³⁷ Juxtaposing “our terrible history in the science and profession of psychology” (ibid.) and “the advances made by our rainbow nation” (ibid.), Mkhize notes “the steady pace of progress that organised psychology under the leadership of PsySSA has made” (ibid.). Despite that fact that “a nascent democracy like ours makes us merely a teenager compared to other countries, particularly in the Global North” (ibid.), she observes that “[o]ur country, flush from [the FIFA] World Cup, has come together remarkably and there is a new sense of common purpose” (ibid.). She ends with the prediction that psychologists “will play a very progressive role... to assist those less fortunate amongst us” (ibid.).

¹³⁶ ‘Input’ is another common term in economics (and computer science).

¹³⁷ I am thankful to Ms Fatima Seedat of PsySSA for sending me a copy of the Deputy Minister’s address.

In light of the many comments made by PsySSA speakers regarding the challenges the discipline faces, one can be forgiven for thinking that Hlengiwe Mkhize is talking about psychology in another country. Largely an exercise in epideictic oratory, her address employs mostly “ceremonial discourse,” which is less concerned with persuading than it is with pleasing an audience (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 23). The sole objective is to praise – in this case, psychology – as one would a human being in a testimonial. Without providing details, Mkhize accentuates the achievements of the discipline, convinced of its future ‘social relevance’. As was the case with almost all of her predecessors, she invokes the local-global binary, implying that the adolescent South will eventually attain the standards of the established Northern democracies. But in making the North her yardstick, Mkhize differs with her namesake (B. Mkhize, 2007) – which may explain why her delivery is somewhat removed from the ongoing plight of the majority of South Africans.¹³⁸

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, 2011 (E. TLOU)

In comparison with Mkhize (2010), Emmanuel Tlou is less than complimentary towards his colleagues, castigating them for “the self-limiting and defeatist attitude I have seen among many of you” (2011, p. 1).¹³⁹ He accuses them of unnecessary bickering over the revised professional scope of practice, when, instead of fighting about “the sub-20% of the population who are on medical aid or hospitalised” (p. 2), the focus should be on “the rest of the population we could be serving” (ibid.). He reminds the audience that South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world with over two million economically inactive young adults. Consequently, “[w]e need to be asking ourselves what defines the South African society, what is unique about it and what psychology should do to address the society’s needs” (ibid.). If anything, the scope of practice should be about “how much we are not doing” (ibid.).

Tlou reenters the genre of deliberative oratory. His concern is with the future of the discipline, and, positioning himself within a discourse of *civic responsibility*, he exhorts and dissuades in equal measure. However, by using a metaphor in which he likens those who can afford psychological services to “a slice of bread” (p. 2) and the rest of the South African population to “a whole bakery full of freshly baked bread that is not being eaten” (ibid.), Tlou

¹³⁸ Mkhize creates a distancing effect when referring to ‘those less fortunate amongst us’. She frames the impoverishment of millions in relation to the relative prosperity of her audience, making human suffering a question of ‘fortune’. In this way, ‘those less fortunate amongst us’ become a charity case rather than an indictment of unequal social relations.

¹³⁹ I am grateful to Dr Tlou for sending me his speech.

appears to exploit the very market discourse whose ethic, moments earlier, he had found objectionable. Indeed, whereas he discourages his fellow practitioners from “engaging in turf wars” among themselves (ibid.), he calls on them to “protect... our profession from invasion by unqualified laypersons calling themselves psychotherapists and hypnotherapists and other kinds of healers of the mind and soul” (ibid.). Even so, Tlou’s bread metaphor is not a sign of a commercialist instinct: his point is that “[w]e have lost sight of the developmental role our profession could play in creating a better society” (ibid.).

DISCUSSION

The advent and proliferation of market discourse in post-apartheid psychology reflects important shifts in the country’s political, economic and higher education visions. During the late eighties, the ruling NP and the banned ANC held secret ‘talks about talks’, motivated partly by American and Soviet behind-the-scenes involvement but also by a shared concern about the social cost of economic decline.¹⁴⁰ Soon enough, by the early nineties, the ANC had converted to the so-called ‘Washington Consensus’, thanks to the efforts of diplomats, the corporate sector, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (P. E. Louw, 2004).¹⁴¹ In 1993, after participating in a series of forums, conferences, briefings, seminars and think tanks, the Congress – in partnership with the NP and corporate ‘super-salesmen’ – signed a secret protocol on economic policy endorsing neo-liberal trickle-down economics (Terreblanche, 2002). ANC leaders were anxious to bring about a speedy political settlement – Zulu federalists and the white Right were threatening to derail the fragile negotiation process – and found themselves pressured into making economic concessions that read “like the wish list of a corporate sector desperate to resolve its 20-year-long accumulation crisis” (ibid., p. 97). To be sure, the party did unveil an interventionist Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as its 1994 election manifesto – but two years after winning the elections, the Ministry of Finance announced a new macroeconomic strategy called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), which, “decorated with all the trimmings of globalisation, ... represent[ed] an almost desperate attempt to attract [foreign direct investment]” (ibid., p. 114).

While the view of some is that, since 1994, South Africa’s ruling political class has “enthusiastically embraced the philosophy of the late capitalist ‘free market’” (Bertelsen, 1998, p. 221), it is equally true that the ANC was unfortunate enough to come to power at a

¹⁴⁰ According to scenario planners, sanctions and falling foreign investment could have precipitated all-out revolution.

¹⁴¹ At the time of its unbanning in 1990, the ANC favored a socialist economic dispensation.

time when the project of global capitalism was already operating at full tilt (P. E. Louw, 2004). Caught between the expectations of a socialist-developmental constituency and those of an international neo-liberal orthodoxy, the party found itself in an impossible position. “[C]heckmated by the power of globalized capital and the white [corporate] establishment” (ibid., p. 198), the ANC-led government resorted to a policy of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) to uplift *some* – rather than *all* – black South Africans. What appeared to be multiracial capitalism was, in effect, “blurred racial capitalism” (ibid., p. 178) – but the semblance of upward mobility it created was sufficient, for the time being, to stabilize the economic system.

Inevitably, the cracks began to show. Unable to deliver the economic prosperity that black South Africans were promised, Thabo Mbeki forewent the reconciliatory rhetoric of Nelson Mandela’s “public relations presidency” (ibid., p. 177), opting for an aggressive cocktail of Africanism-Bikoism that culminated in his call for an African Renaissance. In punting black solidarity, Mbeki was attempting to gloss over the economic disparities inside *black* South Africa. Not only that: the African Renaissance provided the ideological wherewithal for Mbeki’s plan to align Africa with the globalizing world economy – which was to be achieved by exporting free-market economics to all corners of the continent in the form of his New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The dream of continental rebirth, that is, was “the best thing that... ever happened to South Africa’s (still mostly white) corporate sector” (ibid., p. 186).

The end of isolation impacted powerfully on the South African academy, too. Persuaded by the Mode 2 thesis (Gibbons et al., 1994), a group of prominent policy scholars developed a series of influential papers on higher education that encouraged the adoption of the new mode of knowledge production (Jansen, 2002).¹⁴² It was clear that, despite the

¹⁴² The Mode 2 thesis asserts that, in the final quarter of the twentieth century, knowledge production came to be organized in fundamentally different ways. Context-driven, transdisciplinary, innovative and highly reflexive, the new regime was the result of a globalizing world economy, increased economic competition and changing public policies. What Etzkowitz (e.g. 2001) calls a ‘second academic revolution’ that began in the 1970s and took off in the 1980s was, theoretically, a search for ‘relevant’ knowledge (Hessels & van Lente, 2008). Beginning in the United States, an academic revolution predicated on the capitalization of knowledge spread throughout the world. In Thatcherite Britain,

[t]he universities, long suspected by Conservatives of being incubators of socialism, were particular targets. They, too, were told to become entrepreneurial. Academics were to be useful members of the society, contributing directly to the national goal of wealth-creation. The government, which finances the main funding councils of research, has made it clear that research, which aids the nation’s profitability, should be given priority.... Entrepreneurial professors are the order of the day. Academics compete to obtain research contracts. Funding is not sought in order to do research, but research is done in order to get funding. (Billig, 1996, p. 8)

traditional „disciplinary’ discourse’s continued domination of the country’s higher education landscape, the growing influence of the „credit exchange’ discourse could no longer be denied (Ensor, 2004). In keeping with state priorities, the academy came increasingly to assess its teaching, research and community service outputs in terms of their global competitiveness, while notions of academic freedom and social emancipation assumed largely rhetorical significance (Singh, 2001). International best practice “would overrun the national reform agenda for higher education like a flood through a hole in the wall” (Maassen & Cloete, 2002, p. 15). The „public good’ benefits of higher education were superseded by economic imperatives; „social relevance’ was overlooked in favor of „market relevance’. All the while, the contradiction of institutional reform that was rationalized in entrepreneurial terms and mission statements that continued to express these very institutions’ commitment to social transformation persisted.

Beginning in the early nineties, then, a concatenation of international, regional and local developments facilitated the spread of a market culture that would saturate post-apartheid psychology. Year after year, PsySSA’s presidents and guest speakers deployed a *market* discourse that concentrated on commercial interests (Veldsman, 1996), global competitiveness (Asmal, 2001; Mkhathswa, 2000) and the discipline’s international standing (H. Mkhize, 2010; Sibaya, 2004). Admittedly, references to „the past’ were prominent, too, and animated a competing discourse of *civic responsibility* (e.g. Badat, 2002; B. Mkhize, 2007; Tlou, 2011; Tsedu, 2003). But within PsySSA’s discursive order, the hegemonic discourse was that of the market – with „relevance’ shifting closer to economics than politics (Painter & van Ommen, 2008).

According to the standard account, then, calls for ‘relevance’ originated in a context of global economic competition and scientific achievement, with universities forced to adopt a third, industry-driven mission that complemented the first two missions of teaching and research. The less-cited version is that appeals for ‘relevance’ emerged in response to widespread socio-economic turmoil and that Gibbons and colleagues (1994) “might not only present too Manichean a picture, but also an overly-optimistic vision of the changes affecting science and society today” (Pestre, 2003, p. 246). The result was that a discourse produced under conditions of social alienation was assimilated into a reinvigorated “spirit of capitalism” (ibid., p. 252). Reminiscent of Benda’s (2007) treasonous intellectuals and Marcuse’s (1965) repressive tolerance, ‘engaged scholarship’ – known otherwise as ‘social responsiveness’ – was commodified as a series of signposts on the road to tenure. Known variously as *finalization science* (Böhme, van den Daele, Hohlfeld, Krohn, & Schäfer, 1983), *strategic research* (Irvine & Martin, 1984), *post-normal science* (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1994), *Mode 2* (Gibbons et al., 1994; Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001), *post-academic science* (Ziman, 2000), *academic capitalism* (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), the *triple helix* (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997) and *systems of innovation* (Edquist & Hommen, 1999), the new regime’s significance is open to interpretation.

Asking whether PsySSA has betrayed its social mandate is unhelpful. Problems of definition do not allow for satisfactory answers as it is by no means certain, when speaking of the „public good’, “which public” or “whose good” is intended (Calhoun, 1998, p. 20). It suffices, rather, to note that the association’s reliance on market discourse mirrors the managerialist ethic that now pervades South African politics, economics and higher education. And, since globalization-as-neo-liberalism and localization-as-Afrocentrism have become ideologically compatible at a moment in world history when many claim that the “economic imperative... will sweep all before it” (Singh, 2001, p. 20), the „social relevance’ over which apartheid-era psychologists agonized, may well have become an irrelevance of the past.

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CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

Social relevance: We encourage a multiplicity of opinions and seek way to incorporate the voices and experiences of all communities and avenues of psychology. (PsySSA's Vision, Mission and Value Statement)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis was to account for the enduring debate about „relevance’ in South African psychology. As far as can be determined, it represents the first attempt to historicize „relevance’ – locally and internationally – despite calls for „relevance’ being part and parcel of the international history of psychology. The historical chapter delineated this fixation on „relevance’, describing how the appeal for „relevance’ in American psychology was reproduced in Western Europe in the late sixties as psychologists around the world struggled to relate their activities to the social turmoil that surrounded them. It observed further how psychologists throughout the Third World experienced significant difficulties in adapting a Euro-American package to meet the developmental needs of newly independent nations. In short, questions were being asked everywhere about the value of psychology in a rapidly changing world.

The thesis then attempted to theorize this preponderance of „relevance’-speak in terms of the discipline’s well-documented troubles delimiting its subject matter, its dependence on a basic science for its scientific pedigree, and its difficulty accommodating the social world. Calls for „relevance’, that is, assumed that psychology *should* intervene in the „real world’. However, with „reality’ only accessible via language, the argument was made that „relevance’ had to be credentialed discursively, too, which went some way towards explaining the seeming interminability of debates about „relevance’. As much as „relevance’ spoke to issues of materiality, its rhetorical quality could not be circumvented, which necessitated a theoretical framework that was epistemologically relativist, while the question of ontology, effectively, was bracketed out.

In order to investigate the appeal for „relevance’ in South African psychology, it was decided to analyze addresses delivered at annual national psychology congresses. This was based on the assumption that psychology congresses represented an ideal forum at which one could expect the relationship between the discipline and the broader public to be discussed. In total, sixty-four presidential, keynote and opening addresses were collected for the period 1950 to 2011, of which forty-five comprised the actual data set. Norman Fairclough’s three-

dimensional model for critical discourse analysis was selected as an analytic frame on the grounds that it made provision for textual/rhetorical, discursive and social levels of analysis. This last level of analysis was considered important because, although the study's theoretical framework did not claim an ontological position, a bottom line reality had not been denied either. At all stages of the analysis, the study's research questions were kept foremost in mind:

1. What are the terms of debate within South African psychology concerning its „relevance’?
2. How have these changed with passage of time?
3. How is „relevance’ articulated currently within the discipline?
4. How can changes in South African psychology's discourses about „relevance’ be understood?

On the vexed matter of origins, it can be surmised that South African psychology's debate about „relevance’ predates the analytic period of this thesis. In fact, H.F. Verwoerd can be called justifiably “the father of „relevance’”, since he – more than anyone – understood the power of „relevance’ (D. Foster, personal communication, March 28, 2013). Ridding himself of psychology's „social irrelevance’, he opted for applied psychology in 1927 and social work in 1932 (Balstad Miller, 1993), and carried on serving his *volk* until his death. Indeed, the first significant finding of this study was that the call for „relevance’ did not originate – as has been asserted – in Anglophone universities of the eighties that protested against the extremes of apartheid rule. Already in the 1950s, Afrikaner psychologists were advancing a *professionalist* discourse of public service that was concerned, clearly, with „social relevance’. But although an Afrikaner government had been in power since 1948, these psychologists avoided Afrikaner nationalist discourse in the same way that NP politicians downplayed their republican ambitions in order to broaden their constituency. English-speaking psychologists, by contrast, promoted a discourse of *disciplinarity* that was preoccupied with the structure and content of the discipline – typical of apartheid-era liberals who preferred „reason and moderation’ to outright political involvement.

In the 1960s – especially now that a republic had been declared – Afrikanerdom grew bolder. PIRSA psychologists would not countenance the prospect of a racially integrated discipline and set about articulating a *volksdiens* discourse that called for „ethnic-national relevance’ in psychological investigation. Concern for the survival of the Afrikaner *volk* – and, by extension, the preservation of apartheid rule – necessitated research that „involves the

scientific basis of separate development'. By the 1970s, however, the apartheid state was having to contend with one crisis after another. The neutralization of the 'British bogeyman', the *volk's* economic stratification, cultural upheaval and inept political leadership oversaw the unraveling of PIRSA ideology. Addresses became less concerned with South African politics: 'ethnic-national relevance' was replaced with a generic 'social relevance' whose points of departure were now anomie, Western capitalism and a growing technocratic order. Later still, by the mid-seventies, the idea of 'social relevance' lost its coherence altogether.

The 1980s were a flash point in the struggle against apartheid and witnessed the resurrection of 'social relevance'. OASSSA, influenced by UDF politics, put forward a *liberationist* discourse that causally linked apartheid policy to mental health problems; this generated a professional obligation according to which psychologists were encouraged to participate in mass politics. In contrast, PASA interpreted 'social relevance' in politically conservative terms. It advanced, variously, a *professionalist* discourse that sought to consolidate the profession by meeting the general mental health needs of the South African public; a discourse of *disciplinarity* that filtered political questions via the depoliticizing lens of the discipline; a *cultural* discourse that, while advocating the importance of studying black Africans, lapsed into racial 'othering'; and a *salvation* discourse that appropriated 'social relevance' as a means to invigorate a reactionary discipline. PASA's almost studied aversion to politics replicated the apartheid state's technocratic turn in the late seventies and early eighties, when Prime Minister Botha adopted a 'new language of legitimation'. Invisibilizing 'race', the official 'Total Strategy' discourse embraced a technocratic managerialism that would permeate the discursive practices of many white South Africans.

The quest for 'social relevance' continued in the post-apartheid years in the form of a discourse of *civic responsibility*. Framed as unresolved, the country's brutal past was tailor-made for the interventions of socially conscious psychologists. Yet PsySSA's discursive order was controlled by a *market* discourse that prescribed, correspondingly, a 'market relevance'. What mattered were 'international accolades', 'global competitiveness' and 'improvement in tariffs', with a matching focus on 'our core products', 'service delivery', 'fostering productivity' and 'meeting targets'. Upon reentering the international community, South Africa's political, economic and higher education philosophies had no option but to adjust themselves to the requirements of a neo-liberal hegemony. Prescribing the capitalization of knowledge, a new mode of knowledge production held sway – and psychologists everywhere were expected to play by the rules.

REFLECTIONS

This study contains several limitations that can affect the validity of its findings. The first concerns the selection of the *data corpus* – specifically, the assumption that psychological societies represent adequately the interests of the discipline. While associations claim typically to do just that, there are always substantial numbers of psychologists who are either unaffiliated to these societies or, if they are members, participate negligibly in their activities. This is an observation of some pertinence in the post-apartheid era when many white psychologists – they constitute approximately three quarters of all psychologists in the country – withdrew from the associational life (C. Tredoux, personal communication, 2010). It may have been useful, therefore, to include an analysis of articles published in South African psychology journals, which are overrepresented by white psychologists. However, this would have increased the scope of the thesis to unmanageable proportions, prejudicing a detailed analysis of the collected speeches.

It may be pointed out, alternatively, that this study of ‘relevance’ should have included a set of interviews with prominent South African psychologists, which could have supplemented the collected speeches as an additional data source. Again, apart from the question of scope – not to mention the fact that, under such a scenario, the 1950s and 1960s almost certainly would have been unaccounted for – speaking to psychologists about events from the remote past would have either invited distorted memories or drawn blank responses.¹⁴³ Accretions and oversights are all too common when remembering even the recent past. Besides, the Raubenheimer interviews conducted in the early eighties provided assistance in the interpretation of the empirical material. While they would not have been free from distortions either, it can be reasoned that these would have been of a lesser magnitude than had those interviews been conducted post-2010. This is not to suggest that the study’s reported findings are ‘true’ – what has been presented, after all, is a ‘discussable truth’ – but that, in terms of the study’s relativist epistemology, *better* approximations of the social world, committed to a transparent set of rules, are always possible. To be sure, trade-offs cannot be avoided when deciding on data sources.

There are also obvious *gaps* in the data set – in particular, the complete absence of SAPA addresses during the 1960s and 1970s. In what terms did SAPA view its mission at the time that PIRSA was advancing a *volksdiens* discourse? Did Schlebusch’s liberal

¹⁴³ Interviews were part of the original study design. However, in several preliminary interviews that were conducted, psychologists were unable frequently to recall in detail the kind of information that was being sought.

individualism persist? How did SAPA position itself when the apartheid regime started to decline? Certainly, every effort was made to locate the SAPA archives. Unfortunately, reports that PsySSA and/or the University of the Witwatersrand were in possession of these documents, turned into blind alleys, as did conversations with several SAPA members.¹⁴⁴ As for the general lack of presidential addresses from 1983 onwards, one can only speculate why this was the case. The scarcity of such addresses in the eighties and early nineties reflects possibly the state of flux that defined the national politics of the time, while the relative lack of addresses in the post-apartheid era is perhaps an indicator of PsySSA's embrace of a market-friendly discipline disinclined towards tradition.

Another shortcoming is the lack of analytic *balance* between addresses. Much of Chapter 6, for example, amounted to a rhetorical analysis of just two speeches. Granted, the juxtaposing of la Grange and Schlebusch exemplified the divisiveness of 'relevance' at a time still remembered as the most traumatic in the history of South African psychology, while an effort was made to analyze these speeches at the discursive and social levels. Yet these attempts do not dissolve a larger problem, namely, that the sheer size of the data set made it impractical to provide exhaustive textual/rhetorical, discursive and social analyses for every speech. Fairclough's three-dimensional model became subsequently more of an analytic frame than an exact guide: the thesis as a whole tried to do justice to all three levels of analysis but, in wanting to cover a great deal of ground, it spread itself thin at times, with systematic links between levels not always apparent.¹⁴⁵ It is evident from the analytic chapters that the analysis focused firstly on rhetorical and then discursive practices, with discussion sections in each of these chapters addressing socio-historical practices. In a sense, rhetoric 'outdoes' discourse: by understating didactic detail for the sake of historical narrativity, discourses emerge sometimes as if summoned, giving credence to the charge that 'anything goes'. Moreover, with the progression of the analytic chapters, there is a distinct sense of history being treated as an 'add-on', with no account of the 'action orientation' or ideological effects of discourses. Although the study's research questions did not oblige an elucidation of such effects, the result of the omission is that the study can be said to suffer

¹⁴⁴ It is an open question whether a significant number of SAPA addresses from the 1960s and 1970s ever existed. According to the final newsletter of SAPA's Western Cape branch, dated January 1983 and signed by Don Foster and Ann Levett, "[i]f the 1960's were generally characterised by a low but consistent degree of SAPA activity, the lowest point was reached in 1979 when only a single meeting was held" (Foster papers, University of Cape Town).

¹⁴⁵ This may explain why, despite criticisms, CDA studies tend to focus on single texts: as this study has discovered, the level of analytic detail required by CDA is difficult to achieve when analyzing large data sets.

from the same weakness that afflicts many others in critical discourse analysis. Socio-historical practices end up becoming no more than a backdrop for discursive practices, with CDA's agenda for social change reading once more like an empty promise.

In retrospect, the study's social constructionist outlook – somewhat inimical to the question of history – does not lend itself to a strict reproduction of a critical discourse analysis.¹⁴⁶ The thesis is less interested in history *per se* than in how ways of talking about „relevance' have changed over time. It prioritizes the analysis of addresses' rhetorical and discursive features at the expense of a more searching treatment of socio-historical practices. Consequently, the direction of the relationship between discourse and history is not explicated at all. While it is noted how milestones in South African history coincided with the appearance of novel iterations of „relevance' – for example, the declaration of a republic in 1961, the founding of the UDF in 1983 and the birth of democracy in 1994 – these are presented as little more than historical concurrences. Similar in spirit to the Foucauldian „method', the thesis recognizes the difficulty involved in extrapolating cause-effect relationships and ends up advancing, for the most part, a non-interpretive historical account.

This may provoke the ire of those for whom the history of psychology in South Africa is simply a history of oppression. The study, however, was never intended as a reenactment of this battle that has been waged many times over; as for the objection itself, it overlooks Foucault's reminder that, “where there is power there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (1981, p. 95). There is a danger in casting the past as wholly repressive in comparison with a civilized – and hence uninterrogable – present. As it is, the overall trajectory of histories of South African psychology corroborates the Enlightenment postulate of history having a point. Until the 1970s, accounts were largely of the celebratory „Great Man' genre, uncritical of the political dispensation of the day (van Ommen, 2008). In the 1980s, descriptions of the discipline's complicity with apartheid ideology (e.g. Bulhan (1981)) started to appear.¹⁴⁷ The early nineties witnessed a proliferation of similar works (e.g. Foster (1991), Nicholas (1990) and Duncan (1993)), while, in the post-apartheid era, a continuing but dwindling spirit of critique carried on into the new millennium (e.g. Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey & Seedat (2001)). The now hegemonic story of South African psychology has started functioning as a

¹⁴⁶ This is a strong indication that Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) *are* proponents of a bottom line reality.

¹⁴⁷ In another context, Foucault – lecturing in 1976 – spoke about “the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses” (1980b, p. 80). It was also in the 1970s that critical histories of psychology started to appear internationally, attributable in some measure to the “disenchantment of science” (Danziger, 1994, p. 473).

morality tale – see Cooper and Nicholas (2012) – while the „hidden transcripts’ of both the powerful and the powerless remain out of earshot (Scott, 1990). The story begins with a discipline in whose young life all seems well. Soon enough, it finds itself forced into confrontation with its shadow. Troubled increasingly by the surrounding turmoil, psychology grows in sensitivity to the needs of the country’s majority. It discovers, eventually, the *chi* of liberation and plays its part in bringing down the apartheid regime. The discipline is victorious. The struggle is over¹⁴⁸ – history is over¹⁴⁹ – hence the dearth of historical writing on post-apartheid psychology (Painter & van Ommen, 2008).

Regarding the study’s *findings*, one that is especially open to contestation is the seeming characterization of English-speaking psychologists as politically disinterested. This constitutes a manifest oversimplification. Such a charge cannot be leveled against the likes of Ian MacCrone, Ronald Albino or Eleanor Pratt-Yule, for that matter. Even Simon Biesheuvel goes to the trouble of at least entertaining political questions: the fact that he arrives at a different conclusion compared to progressive psychologists does not make him, *ipso facto*, a WESSA „ghost with ears’. Typecasting Anglophone psychologists as apolitical disciples of science is as mistaken a conception as that of Afrikaner pragmatism; both caricatures approach the cultural essentialism that epitomized apartheid logic. The wider implication, however, is that discourses are not the internally consistent entities that this study inadvertently suggests them to be. The contradictoriness of social talk that features strongly in the works of Potter and Wetherell has not been elicited by this analysis, which has tended to emphasize speakers’ fidelity to particular discourses. Accordingly, it would seem that a post-structuralist conception of discourse, descending from on high, has prevailed. Some will argue, therefore, that the aforementioned preference for the historical narrative rather than expository detail may have led to an unintentional exchange of the actual discourses in the analytic material for the established discourses of history. To this it is countered that the analytic chapters, which, in keeping with the study’s transparency criterion, provide both plentiful and lengthy extracts from the data set, have made a sufficiently sound case to the contrary.

IMPLICATIONS

In a recently published opinion piece on PsySSA’s 2012 installment of the International Congress of Psychology, a South African critical psychologist finds himself paging through

¹⁴⁸ Early post-apartheid talk of the ‘rainbow nation’ exemplified this spirit of optimism.

¹⁴⁹ Fukuyama’s (2006) ‘end of history’ thesis comes to mind, in which democracy becomes an unsurpassable form of governance.

the three-hundred-and-fifty-page congress program (Painter, 2012). He comes across Freud's and Jung's names just once amid the titles of thousands of papers; „entrepreneurship', however, appears twenty-five times before he decides to stop counting. Curiously, the terms „neo-liberalism' and „capitalism' – “What is the „entrepreneur' other than the ideological form of the neo-liberal self?” (ibid., para. 28) – appear only once. He asks, “Does this mean that psychologists are oblivious of the contexts in which they work” (para. 27)? Answering himself in the negative, he reasons: psychologists “understand the demands of neo-liberalism and capitalism all too well and are eager to make themselves useful once again as consultants for the New World order” (para. 28). Entrepreneurship “no longer describes one of the functions of the self, but, partly through psychology, has been elevated to a personality type. It is an ideal to strive for” (para. 29).

Nonetheless, „social relevance' – one of PsySSA's stated core values – continues to animate discussions among South African psychologists. The theme for the Southern African Students' Psychology Conference, to be held in June 2013, is *Psychology (In)action*, while that of PsySSA's nineteenth national congress, to be held in September 2013, is *South African and African Psychology in the 21st Century: Challenges and Relevance*. Whereas the discipline drones on about „cultural' and „social relevance', no mention is made of the „market relevance' that actually controls PsySSA's order of discourse. A hegemonic discourse is invisibilized in what appears to be a case of the fish being last to discover the ocean. Meanwhile, psychologists go on advancing the weary discourse of civic responsibility, asking why, despite their best intentions, psychology in this country is no closer to meeting the mental health requirements of the majority of South Africans, half of whom live below the poverty line.

Why does PsySSA not express – at the outset – a commitment to „market relevance' in its mission statement? There are different explanations for this, depending on how one understands the relationship between discourse and agency. For poststructuralists, there is no question of subjects making their own decisions about discursive practices: human beings are prisoners of discourse. Besides, in the Foucauldian scheme, it is a diffuse power/knowledge nexus – not psychologists or their associations – that decides what will be known. For rhetoricians, certainly, the situation is different: PsySSA cannot promote „market relevance' because, in the words of Fanon, it “no longer dares appear without disguise” (2006, p. 23). Given their protracted struggle for political freedom, few things are more enraging to impoverished South Africans than the perpetuation of their economic bondage.

The discipline faces daunting structural challenges. At the time of writing, it costs on average R700 for a fifty-minute visit to a clinical psychologist. To put the matter into perspective, the median monthly income of black African working adults is R1000. With a shortfall of psychologists working in rural communities, unaffordable taxi fees to get to urban centers, long waiting times at clinics in those centers, mental health professionals that cannot speak indigenous African languages, and employers unwilling to lose employees for an entire day, the odds are stacked against average South Africans that *want* to avail themselves of counseling services. For the many that do *not* wish to utilize the expertise of psychologists, there are non-structural barriers to treatment to contend with, including stigma around mental health problems, misconceptions about the nature of psychological services and the middle-class logic of a discipline at odds with the living conditions of its patients.

This thesis does nothing to address any of the obstacles that most South Africans encounter before making it into the consulting room. What it offers, instead, is what Fairclough calls „critical language awareness’, providing psychologists with the opportunity of becoming more aware of their discursive practices. Given the constitutiveness of discourse, it is impossible to create a profession accessible to all South Africans while oblivious of a hegemonic market discourse that is unconcerned with the lives of subjugated communities. Invisible discourses cannot be contested, “consciousness is the first step towards emancipation” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 1).

Conscientization notwithstanding, this thesis has refused, effectively, to let „relevance’ go. Nowadays, psychologists once in the vanguard of the struggle dismiss it as a discourse of trauma: the war is over, they say, we need to move on. It is worrying when once critical voices relinquish the historical perspective, warning no longer of what is at stake. In South Africa, the rise of the market has increased disparities between the haves and have-nots, fueling a seething discontent. If ever there were a time to challenge „market relevance’, then it is surely now. It is not being suggested, however, that with sufficient effort the „social’ will eventually supplant the „market’ when it comes to the floating signifier of „relevance’. The time has come, in fact, to dispense with the idiom of „relevance’ altogether. More studies are required, rather, that focus on the current discursive practices of psychologists, whether these are identified in books, journal articles, or conference proceedings. It does not suffice for a critical psychology to study the discourses that circulate in the public domain, when psychology itself remains beyond interrogation. Until the discipline becomes the subject of its own reflexive gaze, its marketization will continue without relent as the country’s majority

gets left behind. Of course, this is about a great deal more than psychology and its discourses: it is about the way the „real’ world operates, after all. But the enormity of the task should not discourage one from the task at hand, namely, the invention of a new language of resistance.

Some will balk at the idea of doing away with „relevance’ entirely – and yet, in light of the academy’s capitulation to a neo-liberal rationality, one cannot overstate the difficulty involved in creating an intelligentsia committed to „social relevance’. It merits restating that, regardless of one’s imagined class solidarity, to „make’ faculty involves successfully negotiating

a force field that imposes its specific determinations upon all those who enter it. Thus she who wants to succeed as a scientist has no choice but to acquire the minimal scientific capital required and to abide by the mores and regulations enforced by the scientific milieu of that time and place. (Wacquant, 2008, p. 268, original emphasis)

While a socially-conditioned habitus can have some bearing on one’s idiosyncratic uptake of that capital, the field constrains the range of positions that may realistically be adopted in a given discipline. Stevens writes of a “double bind” (2001, p. 51), for example, that overtakes black South African trainees in professional psychology, forcing them to choose between the foreign values of the discipline and the familiar ones of their communities of origin. For Callaghan, South African trainees “dis-identify with activist subject positions because of the explicit and implicit censure of such identities in the discourse of professionalisation that is characteristic of psychological practice” (2005, p. 143). This assumes, of course, that candidates with strong political views have not already been “selected out” of training programmes (ibid.) since the “authority to speak” demands the foregoing of all other subject positions (p. 145).

Clearly, it is not as simple a matter as „being the change you want to see in the world’. Intrinsic to the academic life is a struggle between „temporally dominated’ disciplines – the „hard’ sciences and the „soft’ humanities (Bourdieu, 1988, 2001) – a conflict well known to psychologists, almost all of whom will have experienced at some point the unremitting „horizontal’ tension between basic and applied psychology. In South Africa, whereas in years gone by the basic science enjoyed the lion’s share of both academic and intellectual capital, since the last decade of apartheid rule the applied science’s standing has risen significantly amid insistent appeals for „socially responsive’ research. With passage of time, the „relevance’ factor has morphed into a strategic tool by means of which socially privileged rival groupings compete for access to these forms of capital. Paradoxically, they accomplish this by claiming to represent faithfully the interests of marginalized constituencies, despite

the manifest difficulties involved in doing so (Spivak, 1988). Whatever confessions of bias are made, are usually of token significance, approximating to little more than the postmodern penchant for a “narcissistic” – rather than an exacting “scientific” – reflexivity (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 281).

What about the *cultural* iteration of „social relevance’? Undoubtedly, the search for an „African’ perspective continues to define South African psychology’s struggle for „relevance’ (Holdstock, 2000; N. Mkhize, 2004). Drawing on the writings of African luminaries such as Aimé Césaire, Leopold Senghor, John Mbiti and others, the cultural uniqueness of the continent is held up as a potential fountainhead of indigenous psychological theory. Counterposed to an equally monolithic Western tradition, the African *weltanschauung* is described as past- and present-oriented, as encouraging harmonious relationships of all kinds, as emphasizing the processual nature of personhood, and as stressing a sociocentric definition of self, providing the intellectual justification for a new psychology (N. Mkhize, 2004).

As always, an appreciation of context proves instructive. It is worth recalling that, when calls for an African psychology were first voiced in the late seventies and early eighties at a time of heightened opposition to apartheid rule, an analogous sentiment had already taken hold in the United States in the early seventies, roused by the Nation of Islam’s sermons on the „mental slavery’ of African Americans (Schiele, 2003). The rise of Afrocentrism was mostly an African-American phenomenon dating back to the civil unrest of the late sixties and the related demands within the academy for „relevant’ research in African studies (Howe, 1998). What animated the quest for an African psychology, therefore, was a desire to reclaim an inferiorized heritage, informed by a celebratory spirit towards all things African. In Fanonian terms, the black man’s task became one of “lay[ing] bare the white man in himself” (Fanon, 2008, p. 156) and paying “tribute to his own revolting ugliness” (Césaire, 1946, p. 65 quoted *ibid.*).

In post-apartheid South Africa, it is the „African Renaissance’ movement inaugurated by then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, which exemplifies this celebration of all things local. The idea of an African Renaissance first entered the official parlance of the ruling ANC in 1997 and was followed in quick succession by an African Renaissance conference in 1998, the establishment of the African Renaissance Institute in 1999 and the launch of the South African Chapter of the African Renaissance in 2000 (Maloka, 2001). In his keynote address at the conference, Mbeki quotes from an article that appeared the day before in the Sunday press:

For long our people have suffered untold hardships. For long our collective destiny has been compromised by selfish rulers. This conference should not end up another academic talk-shop irrelevant to the needs of the common man. We want practical solutions to our problems. This is our chance. (1999, p. xiii)

Mbeki aligns himself with the writer's "spirit of impatience", stating that the conference participants, "by convening as you have, you have taken all of us an important step forward towards the realisation of our common goal of the renewal of our continent" (ibid.). He hopes for a "new African world which the African renaissance seeks to build... one of democracy, peace and stability, sustainable development and a better life for the people, nonracism and nonsexism, equality among the nations, and a just and democratic system of international governance." (p. xviii). Mbeki calls for the restoration of African pride, lost through centuries of "contempt for the colour black... what this means is that we must recall everything that is good and inspiring in our past" (pp. xx-xxi). It is "the enormous brain power" (p. xxi) of Africa that must secure the new century for the continent.

The African Renaissance is ostensibly an anti-imperialist project (Maloka, 2001) that represents a postcolonial, pan-African uprising against global domination and an academy-inspired commitment to locally generated, „socially relevant’ solutions. Critics point out, however, that it is unclear who the keepers of the African Renaissance are: does it belong to Africa, the ANC, the Pan Africanist Congress or the Union Buildings in Pretoria (Maloka, 2001)? Some are sceptical of its obvious European parallels, likening its thoroughgoing discourse of difference to the divide-and-rule tactics of the apartheid regime, while others – such as the former president's brother – decry it as "a triumphalist syndrome that afflicts newly liberated African countries" (M. Mbeki, 1999, p. 213 quoted in Maloka, 2001, n.p.). The political currency of Africanization is not lost on commentators (Swartz, 1998), its ethnophilosophical leanings urging a wistful return to "traditional African practices and beliefs" (Maloka, 2001, n.p.).

There is also the market. The now much-banded-about feel-good term, *ubuntu*, which stresses the virtues of the communal life, has become the trade name of a free and open source computer operating system. Bused in from the nearest township, a Zulu *impi* deploys in „buffalo horn’ formation while appreciative Versace-wearing tourists gawk in the comfort of air-conditioned designer shopping malls. The late South African health minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, declares the benefits of treating AIDS patients with a vegetable cocktail – garlic, beetroot, lemons and African potatoes – believing that "[w]e cannot use Western models of protocols for research and development" (BBC News, 2008). For the Comaroffs (2009), what these self-conscious, stage-managed performances of culture

instantiate is a commodification of ethnicity. It would appear these days that even culture is alive to the rewards of the marketplace.

Despite the Freedom Charter rhetoric – “The people shall govern!” – Mbeki never managed to shake the public’s impression of him as a tweed-wearing (Gevisser, 2007), pipe-smoking “black Englishman” (van Zyl Slabbert, 2006 quoted in Butler, 2007, p. 271). He wasn’t the first politician to speak „for the people’ – nor will he be the last – but in a country where even the vegetation has to be indigenous – the plan for Cape Town is to get rid of Table Mountain’s colonizer pine trees by the year 2025 – one wonders what „cultural relevance’ has in store for South African psychology. The allure of continental myth-making and the associated demand for „cultural relevance’ undermines to some extent the realization of a non-racial society, perpetuating in the eyes of many the same „false consciousness’ propagated by „positive’ apartheid theory. But to even imagine the possibility of a „culturally relevant’ psychology, one has to presume that Spivak’s subaltern can speak after all – and if that were possible, whether it would make any difference in the end:

For me, the question „Who should speak?’ is less crucial than „Who will listen?’. „I will speak for myself as a Third World person’ is an important position for political mobilisation today. But the real demand is that, when I speak from that position, I should be listened to seriously; not with that kind of benevolent imperialism... (Spivak, 1990, pp. 59-60)

For some, these last pages may read like a political manifesto – and, at that, in an epistemologically relativist thesis that lacked the courage to take an ontological stand. What business does it have arguing about the future of psychology in South Africa? On the contrary, that is precisely this study’s recommendation, namely, that „relevance’ is the very thing that must be disputed. The relativist belief in the equivalence of accounts does not mean that accounts should not be presented, contradicted, justified and challenged. Regardless of one’s epistemological and ontological commitments, the discursive world comes with rules for the accreditation of statements, rules that can be replaced with new ones, borne out by successive generations of South African psychologists producing different inflections of „relevance’ over a period spanning six decades. Indeed, at a time when many are being attracted to the universalist promise of cognitive science, arguments about „social relevance’ are likely to persist. For, if the history of „relevance’ reveals anything, it is that psychologists turn to „relevance’ when the discipline turns to „science’. But as this thesis has argued in its closing stages, the idiom of „relevance’ has outlived its usefulness: it is now the market that controls the discursive order.

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